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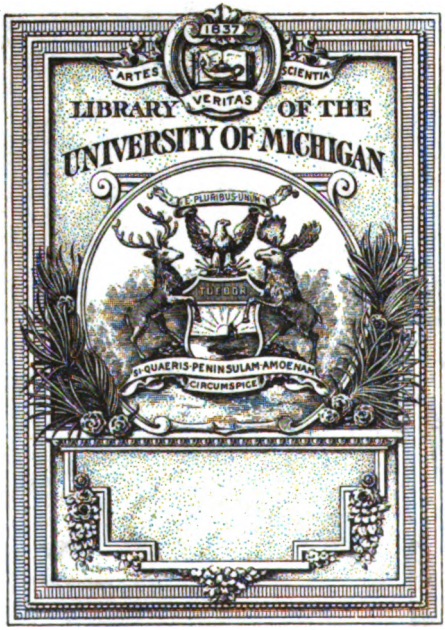

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BOSTON.

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SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. SEPTEMBER 29, 1882. No. 1.

THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1882.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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PREFATORY.

YOU will not deem it inappropriate, I trust, if, before I say another word, I stop long enough to give hearty expression to my gladness at meeting you again. Next to the joy of going away when one is tired and worn is the joy of coming back again when one is rested, to resume once more the chosen labor of life. But, as I speak of the joy, I must think also of the shadow that always accompanies joy, the eternal twin of our gladness in our comings back again from being away. I am glad to see your faces, but I am sad to think that there are faces I shall not see. There are some that I have learned to prize and trust that I shall not see again,— I will not say forever, for I do not believe it is true: but I shall not see them again until I also pass over the border-land and into the darkness that encircles this little lighted spot that we call the stage of our human life.

I rejoice with some of you over the recovery of those who have been close down to the border while you have stood, with dim eyes and tremulous lips, wondering whether they were to cross or to return. I rejoice with you that they have come back again into the light of life.

This morning,— you may not have noted it, the years go by so swiftly,— I stand upon the threshold of the ninth year of my service with you as your minister. I might go back and fill an hour with retrospect, explaining and trying to apologize for errors, shortcomings, and failures. I might go back, with some show of reason, and recount our triumphs, our victories, and our achievements. But, rather than that, it seems to me fitting that I should

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leave to you and your own private thoughts this matter of reminiscence, and that, as I stand here to-day, I should call you to renewed consecration, point toward that which is still undone, and attempt in some fashion to outline our ideal, and so ask you to join with me in the labor of another year toward the accomplishment of that which all along we have been endeavoring to bring to pass.

Let me, then, call your attention to what seems to me the place and function of the Church in the modern world, that we may consider with ourselves seriously that for which we stand, that we may have an intelligent conception of it, and, in the light of that conception, put forth every effort for its realization.

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The Church in the Modern World.*

"The Church of the living God."—I. TIMOTHY iii., 15.

IF there is a Church of the living God there may be also a Church of the dying God. And if the Church of the living God be alive, an ever-advancing growth, then the Church of the dying God, if it be not dead, must be at least becoming less and less, slowly falling back toward the abyss of extinction. I shall have occasion later to explain what I mean by these two contrasts between the Church of the living God and the Church of the dying God.

As logically leading toward that, I wish to express to you once more what I have had occasion to express on other subjects and in other connections, again and again,—my renewed, ever-deepening, ever-widening, ever-living belief that religion is not only the most sacred, the broadest, most inclusive, grandest thing about this human nature of ours, but it is the very heart of humanity. It is something in its very nature permanent, something that must endure forever.

For what is religion? Religion is not this religion nor that; it is not this sect nor that, this ritual nor that, this sacrifice and service nor that. Religion is the feeling, the thought of humanity concerning the relation in which we stand to the life which is at the heart of this universe, out of which we all come and of which we are a part.

Religion, then, is the attempt to give voice and expression to this vital link that binds us forever to God. It is in its very nature a permanent part of humanity. Religion in some form will abide forever. And, as necessarily following from that, may I not assume that you will take it for granted

* Reported phonographically by B. C. Barrows.

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that the Church, which is the external expression and embodiment of so much of the divine, religious life as we can comprehend and express, shall also abide forever? I do not mean that our Church will live forever, that our creed will abide forever, that the Methodist Church or the Catholic Church or the Baptist Church will live forever. I will not even confine myself to believing that the Christian Church, as that word is historically interpreted, shall live forever.

What is the meaning at the heart of this word "Church"? Ecclesia,— a gathering, an assemblage, a synagogue, a coming together, a meeting, an association. No matter what name you give it, it expresses this fact,— the eternally natural and therefore the eternally divine fact that men instinctively associate themselves to carry out those grand purposes and aims which they cannot individually and alone attain unto. If I cannot lift a load alone, I call to my fellow to help me. If two cannot do it, we call on three, a dozen, a hundred, a thousand. Is it not a commonplace that, in all the relations of life, men associate themselves together,—in business, in art, in science, in government, in every direction,— in order to carry out the purpose which they cannot achieve alone? Every single characteristic of man that is essential, that is permanent, not only abides, but seeks forever to incarnate itself in some appropriate material expression, or institution. Art is not a dream simply: it puts itself upon canvas, in the marble, into art associations, into institutions of every kind. Benevolence is not simply a feeling: it builds hospitals and homes. The desire for social well-being is not simply a desire: it organizes societies and establishes governments. It forever objectifies itself, thus becoming a part of the life of man. So religion, being a permanent element of human nature, we may feel sure will forever give itself some kind of expression, objectify itself, incarnate itself in some institution. Whether it be the simple gathering of the Quakers, the elaborate ritual of the Catholic, it makes no difference: the one grand end and aim is forever the same.

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Religion and the Church, then, we may assume to be essentially permanent elements in human nature, essentially permanent factors in the future history and development of humanity.

Now, then, we are ready to consider and deal with the meaning that lies in that brief phrase which I have chosen for my text,—"The Church of the living God." The very fact that we apply the phrase "living God" to him who is the eternal life itself carries with it the natural implication that there have been dead gods and that there are to-day dying gods. And, in the true sense of language, we may consider that this is so. This, of course, as you will see without any elaborate explanation on my part, does not carry with it the question whether the Eternal Life is itself a reality. I have had occasion to tell you, and I must repeat it here again, in order that I may be plainly understood, that, when we say God, we do not measure the ultimate fact. Our word of three letters does not cover infinity. It only covers so much of the divine as we are able in our own minds to associate with the word. Language cannot measure the immeasurable. Thought cannot fathom the unfathomable. Imagination cannot traverse the length and the breadth of that which forever infinitely transcends imagination.

What do we mean, then, when we say God? What has any race, any religion, any people, ever meant when it has said God? The utmost that it could possibly mean has been so much of the divine as the culture, the education, or religious development of the age, has been able to associate with the term. My God and your God are only our conceptions, our thoughts of him who forever outruns conception and transcends thought. And though we live forever, though with the wing of a tireless archangel we may ascend forever toward the stars, the fountain-head of light and life, still we must be infinitely distant from the infinite reality. So, then, as one new, higher, grander thought of God displaces an older and lower thought, the old God is dead and the new God, or the new thought of the Ever-living and Eternal, is

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vital in the heart, the life, the aspiration of man. What I mean by the dead gods, then, you will easily understand,—gods bowed down to and worshipped by the trembling hordes of our primeval ancestors, a god which their thought embodied in a serpent, in a stick, in a stone, in a mountain, in winds, clouds, stars, moon, sun; the gods of Egypt that have slept for ages by the banks of the Nile; the gods of Greece, which now are only the poetry of the civilized world, or which present to us the finest specimens of artistic sculpture; the gods of Rome that once dominated the thinking, the civilization, the government, and the life of that mighty people; the gods of our Scandinavian forefathers. The gods of all the past are dead, except as they live in the results which their religion wrought out and incorporated in us, and which we hold as a part of our life to-day. For, in a very real sense, nothing of the past is dead, and nothing of the past ever will die. By the dying god, I mean such a conception of the divine life at the heart of this universe as was once vital in the beliefs that once controlled the conduct of men, but which is now fading out, and is no longer a controlling motive of that conduct.

I might draw my illustration from any one of a hundred sources, but because of the brevity of the time I shall confine myself to one.

By the Church of the dying God, you may suppose me to understand the dominant theological conception of Christendom for the last fifteen hundred years. The God that has been worshipped by our forefathers is dying,—dying out of the thought, dying out of the belief, dying as a motive power for conduct in the lives of the intelligent men of to-day. And the Church, which is only the material expression and embodiment of this belief, is also passing away.

I do not mean by this, and I wish to be clearly understood, that our conception is necessarily to become dominant in ten, fifty, or a hundred years, or that any truer conception than ours is speedily and at once to replace completely the old. In the light of history, read what I mean. When

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paganism passed away and Christianity took its place, was it done at once? It was the process of centuries. And, even now, it is not complete; for paganism still shouts its doctrines and sings its songs, as in revenge, over the altars of Christendom itself. When the Ptolemaic conception of the universe was replaced by the Copernican, it was not a thing of a moment or a week or a year, not even of a century; but by long processes of displacement of old ideas by new ones, first in the thought of those most competent to think and investigate the problems involved, and then by a slow process and through long periods of time, this replacement went on in the minds of the common masses of men. And, though that discovery took place some hundreds of years ago, it lies latent, half-believed, and carrying only half its implication in the minds of thousands and millions of those we call civilized to-day. It is a slow process.

When passing through a forest, you see a tree with many dead leaves at the top, while the rest of the tree seems vigorous and flourishing. You know perfectly well, if you are skilled in woodcraft, that the tree may stand for five, ten, or twenty years, perhaps, putting out new leaves, bearing some fruit on the lower branches, but that, having begun to die at the top, its doom is sealed. So, when a philosophy, a civilization, a religion, a conception of God, a dominant theology, begins to die at the top; when it is no longer accepted and thoroughly believed by the grandest thinkers, the noblest minds of the age, though it may be centuries before the process is complete, yet disintegration and decay have begun. It means a new growth and a going back to the dust of the old.

This means no loss to the world, rather unspeakable gain. For, as it is the same life of nature in the new tree that reached its beauty and fruitage in the old, so in the new religious thought of the world, if it be reverent, genuine, devoted, true, it is the same infinite life of God in the new as in the old. If the Church of the dying God fades away from the consciousness and thought of the race, it is only

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that the grander, broader, loftier Church of the living God may find room to stand and room to grow.

The Church, then, of the last fifteen hundred years, the dominant conceptions of Christendom for the last fifteen hundred years, are passing away. This Church is the Church of the dying God. Its theology is discredited. Its motives no longer appeal with their old-time force to the consciences of man. Its ideals have in them no longer their old power to stimulate and lift up the enthusiasm of the world.

Now let me explain, as briefly as I can, why this is so,—the essence of the process through which we are passing. Every religion, if you only dig deep enough, you will find has its foundation laid in a scientific conception of the universe. The science may be ever so crude, but every religion rests on a fundamental conception of man about this universe. What kind of a universe is it? Where did it come from? How did it come? How did man appear here? Why did he appear? What kind of a being is he? What has been the nature of his history? Toward what end is he moving? By what process ought he to attempt to reach that end? What motive shall we apply? All these questions, you will see, spring out of an implied scientific conception of the universe.

What was the conception of that which I have ventured to call the Church of the dying God? That at some point in eternity, which is called the beginning of time, the worlds by almighty fiat were called into being; that man was then created,—created in the image of God, a perfect, sinless creature; placed in a world that as yet had known no pang of pain, no falling tear, no wrong, no injustice, no sorrow of any kind. That then, by the jealousy of another being only less than God and his dreadful enemy, evil had been introduced and man had fallen. From that fall follows, by a perfect logic, the divine endeavor to recover him, a part of which scheme was the incarnation of the infinite God himself,—his sufferings, his death, and the doom of a dreadful hell for those who have not accepted this only scheme of

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deliverance. I do not wonder that a thought like this has dominated the race so long; for it has in it all the elements of dramatic power, and appeals to the imagination and touches the heart and fires the enthusiasm. If, indeed, this starting-point be true, that the world was thus created, and that man was thus made and thus fell, then nothing more magnificent can be conceived than this scheme of divine recovery.

But this conception is passing away, for the simple reason that its very corner-stone is itself discredited. Discredited? Nay, that is not forcible enough. It is disproved. It is put beyond question on the part of the competent, unbiassed, intelligent world. Man has not fallen. The world is not cursed. It follows then, by necessary logical steps, that the whole scheme of redemption, as it is called, is unnecessary and out of place. It is an attempt to cure a disease which does not exist. It is an attempt to recover from a condition that is purely imaginary,—an attempt to lift man out of a state in which he has never been. And because this has been discovered, and put beyond rational question, the Church of the past is dying, and that conception of God which accompanied it is fading out of the intelligent and earnest thought of men.

Still, though man does not need salvation in this sense, we cannot open our eyes and look over the world but we are brought face to face with sorrow, face to face with pain, with wrong, with injustice, with disease, with ten thousand burdens of sorrow and care that wear and oppress the heart of the civilized world. It is no wonder that sometimes they cry out that the heavens are empty, and that there is no pity in the heart of God.

Man's need, then, of religion, man's need of some power to cure his hurt, has not passed away. And out of this need and out of the new thought concerning God and man springs this Church of the living God,—the God who is alive to-day, the God who speaks to us to-day, the God who hides behind phenomena and who expresses himself through phe-

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nomena, the God who is concealed by this grand spectacle of nature, the God who makes this grand spectacle of nature as an outer garment.

What, then, are the fundamental principles of this Church of the living God,—the Church that promises to help on the world, that claims to have behind it the power of the living God of to-day?

We do not say any longer "salvation" with its old meanings. We say, rather, education. We say, rather, development. For we believe, nay, we *know*, that man started unspeakably below our present condition; and, through infinite toil and sorrow and tears, he has struggled up to where he is to-day.

Further progress means what? It means sloughing off the remnants of the old ideas, outgrowing our childish conceptions. It means leaving behind us the old impulses, treading under our feet everything that is unworthy of the best possibilities which lure and lead us on. It means perpetual growth from bad to better, from better to better still, forevermore.

What, then, are the conditions of attaining such an end as this,—the conditions to which the Church of the living God must perpetually address herself?

There are three: first, to find out just what man needs. We need next to bring to bear upon him the pressure of adequate motives to draw him to do that which he has discovered he ought to do. And, then, we need last, culminating and crowning thing of all,—we need, as a Church, to embody this new light and these motives in the actuality of better living. We need to be what we can think and feel and hope for, that thus we may become a centre of vital goodness in society, and spread our power of making men feel that it is the highest, noblest conceivable thing for which to live and die.

Just a word or two now on these three points. We need to know just what man has been, what man may be, and how to attain the realization of the ideal. What does this mean

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practically? It means thought: more than that, it means *free thought.* It means fearless thought. It means thought applied to the solution of all the practical problems of life. It means this not as a right, not as a concession merely, a privilege simply, but as a duty. Under the old conception of the Church, a blind faith and unquestioning belief accepted the statements given. But now that very free thought which they would have condemned, that rationalism which was to them the greatest crime, applied to all the problems of life, becomes to us a sacred, religious duty: thought applied to these bodies of ours, to find out their laws and how to take care of them; thought applied to the family, that we may know the relations in which men and women, fathers and mothers and children ought to live; thought applied to society, that we may organize it on principles of justice, principles of charity, and of human fellowship; that the rich and the poor may be rightly related to each other; that the laborer and the capitalist, the sick and the well,— all these classes and aggregations that make up the social whole,— may be related to each other in so grand a harmony as is figured forth by the celestial movements of the stars that compose the constellations above us; thought applied to politics, until we have discerned the principles of government out of which the noblest condition of the race can spring.

Thus there is no sacred, no secular, in this Church of the living God. It is all sacred. For, as there is not one single thing that touches human life and character but becomes one of the forces that makes or mars humanity, so there is no single thing that touches human life or character but is a part of religion. My province is to discuss it here,— to apply to it the principles of life and truth, so far as we can discover them. To discover the truth, using the light of all bibles, of all heroes, of all saviors, of all religions, of all science, art, investigation, past, present, and to come,— an open-eyed search for the last, highest, deepest, grandest truth,— this is the first principle and the first great duty of the Church of the living God.

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And the next is to bring to bear upon man adequate motives, if they can be discovered, to lead him to do that which he knows. We cannot talk any longer in the old sense of hell. We cannot threaten with the wrath of God. We cannot point to a material city in the clouds as the reward of self-sacrifice and denial here. Have we, then, adequate motives left? I think we have. I think we have motives which are the grandest, deepest conceivable. What are they?

Let me ask you, What is the one great motive that governs human conduct? What has always governed it through whatever diversities of opinion, under whatever conception? Is it not the desire for life, with all that content of happiness that gives to life an adequate meaning? And we are able to say from the stand-point of our modern thought, as the world has never been able to say before: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The soul that obeyeth, it shall live. For we have discovered that this world, so long abused, is one of the rooms in the Father's infinite house. We have discovered that these laws of body and brain and heart are the whispers of the living God to his living children. We have discovered that these laws of the living God, wrought into the very nature of man and the universe, are the conditions of life. The old religion said: Do wrong, sin, enjoy yourself if you will. You will have a very pleasant time, and that is really the true way to find pleasure, were it not for something to happen in the other world. And men have followed the first part of their advice, and taken their chances as to the second. The Church of the living God addresses another word to man. It says: Happiness, as proved by ages of human experience, is simply the music of a well-ordered life; and, every time you break a law of body, mind, or soul, you detract so much from the very possibility of happiness, just as every time you mar this organ you take away from the possibility of its producing music. Penalty inevitable, penalty eternal, penalty adequate,— this, then, is our motive.

Now, in a brief word, our end. The knowledge as to how the application of motive is to be made,— what is it for?

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Only that the result may be achieved, that men may live a noble life; only that they may outline in this the ideal manhood and womanhood, that they may organize the ideal, happy, perfect society. We then preach this gospel of the Church of the living God. We must prove to men the superiority of this gospel by asking them frankly, not boastingly, but simply, to judge us by our fruits. However grand the idea may be, though we may have all the motive forces of the world, if they do not actually result in the true life, then we are proving ourselves infidel to our faith, and are preaching a word which the world will not hear, and a word which the world ought not to hear. Men who are engaged in the manufacture of cotton or woollen goods do not simply buy a new piece of machinery on its apparent claims. If they want to build a new mill, they do not put in new machinery that simply looks well. They ask, Does it *work* well? Have you tried it? Until they see the actual result of the thing, that it is really better than the old, they do not give up the old. We must produce higher types of men, nobler souls, more justice, more charity, more sympathy, nobler, truer lives, before we can convert the world to our standards; for it is the fittest forever that survives. Unless we make ourselves the fittest, we not only must, but we ought to, go down.

I appeal to you, then, at the outset of a new year, that you help me organize into vital relations with each other the coherent parts of the Church of the living God,— the God of to-day,— for the hopes and the faiths of the life of to-day. I appeal to you that you help me in my work of discovering truth, in my work of enforcing adequate and appropriate motives, and, above all, that you help me preach this gospel of character and of the new life by being noble men and noble women, helping as far as you may to realize here on earth the city of our God.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy.

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. OCTOBER 6, 1882. No. 2.

FOUNDATION STONES.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1882.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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Foundation Stones that Doubt cannot Disturb.*

I HAVE chosen two brief passages of Scripture as my text; the first from the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke, the first verse: "Those things which are most surely believed among us"; the second from the eighth verse of the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

I was in conversation with a young lady only a little while ago, when, speaking of things that are known and of things concerning which there is more or less doubt and discussion, she remarked, "But it seems to me that we really do not *know* anything." Within a year, I was talking with another young lady on this same question, or another phase of it, when she said, "I really do not know what I do believe." Within the last two or three years, I have had occasion to converse a good deal on these subjects with still another young lady, who was more or less inclined to look toward the Catholic Church as a refuge; and the one attraction to her mind was the fact that there they offered her the universe definitely outlined and mapped out in all its minutest details; and she felt that, if she could accept that, she would know where she was, what foundation she stood upon, and all this confusion would become calm, and she would be settled in her own thinking and feeling. I met, last summer, an elderly gentleman, one who had recently retired from business, one who all his life long has been a worthy and honorable member in a church of the orthodox faith, and

* Phonographically reported by B. C. Barrows.

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who, in the midst of a busy life, has had neither time nor inclination to ask questions outside the limits of the routine of his daily affairs; and now, in his retirement, and as he gets along toward the borders of old age, he has found leisure to read, and he has been compelled to think; and sadness and sorrow have filled his heart because he finds that those things that he had considered settled so long are all afloat, and he has nowhere, as he thinks, to rest.

You know perfectly well how common a charge it is against Liberals, and against those who indulge in the luxury of freethought, and who defend it as a right, and even advocate it as a duty,— you know how common is the charge against all these people that they are unsettling things; that they believe nothing; that they know not where they stand; that they are all afloat. From all these causes, of which I have given you illustrative examples, the impression goes abroad that the great practical themes of the world and of human life are really up for discussion; that there is no certainty anywhere; that the foundations of things are crumbling and giving way; that there is nothing on which society can rest, on which morals can find a firm base, on which religion can be planted so that it cannot be moved.

Now, I do not wonder at all that this should be the superficial feeling in the mind of the person, perplexed and disturbed, who has awakened at last; though thousands never wake up enough to think of the fact that man is a limited finite creature, a little child standing front to front with an infinite universe, a universe therefore of necessity presenting infinite problems for finite solution. I do not wonder that this impression should find its way into the heart of him who is only beginning to think, and who does not think himself clear through the fog, and out into the light on the other side. It seems to me that this matter is so important that it will well repay us if we raise and answer the question this morning as to the things really in debate, and whether they are those of most importance; whether we have no place where we can stand calmly and face the practical prob-

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lems of life; whether, in other words, they are the chief matters that are doubted, or whether, after all, they are only matters of secondary importance.

One or two first principles we at least ought to keep in mind, and they will help us and comfort us in our discussion. I am astonished sometimes at the *naïve* way in which people will argue that a doubt is really able to destroy a truth, as though God himself might cease to exist if somebody questioned his existence. As if the pillars of the universe would fall, if some blind man were to say there are no pillars. We need, for the sanity of our own thinking, and the steadiness and poise of our own intellectual activities, to keep in mind this one point: that no questioning, no investigation, no criticism, ever touched or destroyed a truth, any more than a man's blindness ever quenched a star. We need to remember, therefore, that we can be perfectly free to discuss, to inquire, to ask, to argue, without any bitterness and without any anxiety, for the simple reason that none of our questioning, none of our arguing, disputing, or doubting will change the eternal reality of things by the breadth of a single hair.

I was talking with a lady not long ago, when this very matter came up. She said, as she had said to me a great many times in doubt, "I don't believe there is any future life." I did not stop to argue the question with her at that time, but simply said: "I am very glad that neither your doubts nor my belief has anything to do with the facts. It will not injure the universe, it will not change our future prospects, if we happen to pass through a mood of doubt or hope for an hour."

With these principles in mind then, I want to ask you to go with me while I raise a few of the great questions which modern criticism, discovery, and investigation have unsettled. Then, I want to point out a few of the grand foundation-stones of human life that no doubt has any power to disturb. I want to convince you — as I think I shall be able to do — that the matters that are in debate, however great they may be, however important, are really secondary in their value

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and in their bearing on the great themes of human life and destiny.

There are four great questions which have been raised anew and thrown into the arena of debate for human investigation, discovery, and criticism. At first sight, as I mention them, you may be in a state of astonishment that I should say they are secondary matters, so far as the welfare and happiness of human life are concerned.

What are they? They are no less than these: the Bible, God, man, the future life. These questions, I say, are in debate in the modern world. Yet remember what I said a moment ago,— that all our debate never has produced any change in them, and never will and never can. The truth is the truth forever, and our fancies concerning it cannot make or unmake it.

Let us see then for a moment just what changes have been produced by human thought concerning these four great themes. Take them in order,— first, the Bible. Many of us, perhaps the most of us, were trained, or, if we were not, our parents were, in the belief that this book was, in the real and true sense of the word, a miraculous thing, something apart from all other books in all the libraries of the world. The old Ephesians used to believe that the image of Diana, their goddess, which they had in their famous temple, so long considered one of the seven wonders of the world, really dropped right down out of the sky just as it was and as they had kept it. That was the tradition as to its origin. Like this has been the tradition in which we were trained concerning the Bible, that a complete, miraculous, finished revelation from God was dropped right down out of the heavens; if not as a book, bound in the fashion that we have it, that it came in just as miraculous a way; that it was the one word, the complete, final word from God, touching his own nature, touching human nature and human destiny.

Modern criticism, investigation, and discovery have destroyed what? The Bible? Not a bit of it. They have

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destroyed that conception of the Bible. The Bible, in all its grand poetry, in all its thrilling history, in all its touching biography, in all its mighty power of inspiration to human thought and human love, remains just what it was. Just as "Hamlet" remains in spite of any criticism as to whether it were written by one man by the name of Shakspere or by another by the name of Bacon. And yet it is a tremendous change that this modern criticism has wrought concerning the Bible. It has given us a new conception of the way in which religious truth comes to the intellect and heart of man. It does not touch the matter of revelation in the true sense of that word. There has been, all up the course of the ages, from the first dawn of human consciousness until to-day, a gradual unfolding of the human mind, and a gradual coming in of light and truth into the heart and soul of man. And this coming in through natural processes and natural unfolding is the real revelation that the heart and life of this universe makes to the heart and life of man. And this Bible is only a part, one ray, from the eternal and infinite sun of righteousness and truth.

This changed conception of the Bible, while it has taken away from many people the comfort and rest of their lives, has taken an immense burden off from the hearts and hopes of thousands. Instead of considering it a loss, I must look on this change as an unspeakable gain. If I believed that that Bible is an absolute transcript of the mind and heart of God, then I must look on God as partial, as fickle, as cruel, as merciless. I am burdened with the duty and necessity, if it be possible, of explaining away discrepancies, errors, mistakes, crudities, follies, and superstitions. I must reconcile what seem like the blunders of man with the eternal wisdom of God.

But, if I may believe that the Bible is only man's attempt to read an infinite truth, and that many a time he stumbles like a child with his primer over some hard word, reading it wrong and misinterpreting at every step, then the Bible becomes a perfectly natural book, while all the light, love

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and truth remain. This changed conception of the Bible, then, I must consider as unspeakable gain instead of loss.

Another subject, and one which at first would seem to be more important than anything else in the world, is in debate, —the nature, even the existence of God. Yet I said that I did not consider even this as of chief importance. Can I in a few words make myself so clear that I shall not be misunderstood? Mark what it is that is in debate. There is no doubt about the existence of an infinite and eternal power, measureless in time, measureless in space. There is no doubt that there is a power out of which we have come, by which we are sustained every moment of our lives, under whose laws we find the way of happiness and the path of peace. There is no doubt about all this. It is only a doubt as to whether we shall keep our old conceptions concerning the consciousness, the personality, the character, the nature of this power. It does not touch its existence. When men say, "I do not believe in the existence of God," they do not mean they do not believe in the existence of this power. They mean they do not believe in the existence of the certain conception that they have been accustomed to apply to this being as descriptive, as a label. I may doubt the existence of a million Gods, understanding by that term human conceptions of the nature of this power, and yet may have no doubt of the existence of this power. Here, again, then it is not the chief matter that is in debate. There is no question as to the existence of this power, of this order, of these laws, of the fact of our relation to this power. It is only the question whether I shall thrust my finite interpretation of the infinite on the thought of the world, or whether you shall thrust yours. And it would be a great deal wiser in both of us, if we were a little modest in making such an attempt; for until we have grown and expanded, until we have filled out the outlines of infinity, a complete conception of this power must be beyond us.

And here, again, this change of conception from that which has dominated the world for eighteen hundred years until

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to-day, seems to me no loss, but an unspeakable gain. No, as I have told you before, I would rather believe in no God at all. I would rather believe that there is no thought, no life, no heart outside of man. I would rather believe that I am the sport of infinite and unconscious forces that play with me as the waves of the sea play with the grass, the shell, the chip floating on their surface; that these forces might fling me up into the light, or whelm me in the depths of eternal darkness. I say I would rather believe this than to hold that conception of God which has dominated the world for eighteen hundred years, and which modern thought now dares to call in question. At least, I am not troubled to explain the character, the capriciousness, the immoral conduct, the pitiless, heartless cruelty of a being that knows not what it is doing. I am freed at least from this moral and intellectual burden. This change has been brought about by modern thought,— this putting, as we say, ignorance and uncertainty in the place of what was supposed to be knowledge and certainty; and it is no loss, but an unspeakable gain.

The third question called in debate by the modern world is the nature of man. We used to suppose that we were at least cousins of the "archangel ruined." Or, if we were not archangels, we were at least in our ancestry and origin perfect, made in the image of the Creator, and from that magnificent height we have fallen, until now we are only broken, deformed fragments of our own former selves, a few of us capriciously selected to be restored again to that height from which we fell; but thousands and millions of those we had learned to love and clasp to our arms here on earth were not to climb those steep and rugged heights with us, to stand once more in the light of God's eternal peace, but to go out under a cloud of everlasting darkness, and to send up, in contrast to heaven's eternal music, one everlasting wail.

This, in brief outline, is the old conception of man. Is it not a relief to your hearts, both concerning the thought of

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yourselves and the thought of him who is the maker of us his children, that you can fling this away to the bats and the moles, bury it in the darkness where it belongs, treat it as the crude and cruel imagination of half-developed and barbarous man? And that now you can have another higher, grander conception of human nature; that you can believe that, however we started, we are to-day something better than inchoate, undeveloped demons? There is at least in us the possibility of nobleness or the certainty of extinction; and either the one or the other is better than anything that the old hope dared to promise. This, then, is an indication concerning the change of thought with regard to man. You say you do not know what to believe about human nature, about the origin and destiny of man. Better believe nothing than to believe the old. Any change from that must be an improvement.

One other point: human destiny. We did believe, I did believe, in my childhood (and it was to me then a sweet and precious dream), in the reality of a tangible, divine city, just up there beyond the blue. I can remember how, when my brother died, I used to lie down on the grass under a tree in the garden on a sunny afternoon, and watch the clouds float across the sky, and almost imagine in their fanciful shapes that angel faces looked out. To my imagining thought, I could see the flutter of a wing; and beyond them I could imagine those streets gold-paved, on either side of which were the trees of life with their life-giving fruits. I could almost see the companies of angels playing upon their harps and singing their joyous songs. And I dreamed of my brother among them; and I expected some day to go through that gateway and take him by the hand, to know him as my brother once more. But, friends, I wish to say distinctly and definitely that, however painful at the time was the surrender of that divine dream, that I am not done dreaming. I dare still to believe something quite as fair, something quite as noble, something quite as hopeful. This old definiteness is gone; and I know perfectly well that men

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dare to disbelieve, that they are compelled many a time to disbelieve, in the reality of any future life at all; and I know how it pulls at their heartstrings to do it, and how their eyes are dim as they see the last of that picture, like a dissolving view on canvas, fading away. And yet, concerning this, let me say again, as plainly and frankly as my power to use English will allow, that though that all faded out,— the city, the streets, the angels, the harps, the song,— and though my brother and the hope of seeing him again faded with it, and instead of heaven I looked for a grave, worm-filled, as my paradise; I would take it to-day rather than that old conviction,— with all that accompanied it and all that was implied by it, in the theology of the age. I want no heaven, even with my brother there, if some other brother, or somebody's else brother, must go down forever to endless woe. I will take no heaven, if I can help it, at any such price. The change, then, though it were to blot out the old hope, is only a change in the direction of hope and cheer and peace. For, at least, the grave can offer one thing,— unconsciousness; and that is better than the consciousness of a cureless hurt and an unending pang.

But I do not believe that is the alternative. Doubt, yes; certainty, no,— but a grand hope springing anew in the human heart, and, as I believe, a hope with a meaning.

These, then, are the four great questions in debate; and when people say, "I do not believe anything," "I do not know what I do believe," "It seems to me in giving up the old system we give up our belief in all that is worth keeping," it is these things that they mean. Now, when you remember what I have said to you, that debate and questioning never have power to change the eternal truth; and when you remember that these questions are only questions of nature for the most part, and not questions of ultimate fact, I think you will be ready to agree with me that even these four grand themes are not matters of chief importance to human life.

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What are they? There are three which I may touch on briefly. Suppose you do not know what to believe on any of these questions; suppose you are all at sea concerning them, that you have no definite opinion that you can tie to. Even then, the case is not quite so hopeless as many persons are apt to think; and, when anybody from the old stand-point flings at me the charge of being unsettled concerning these great questions, I take it as no reproach. I admit the fact that the finite mind is not capable as yet of solving infinite problems. Yet I dare to think that these great matters, the important questions, those on which human welfare, human happiness, human life depend,— these are not in debate. So, if you have begun to doubt, you need not fear. You may argue while certainty keeps a firm grip on those grand essentials of life and character of which, after all, we need to be certain, concerning which we need to be settled.

Let me illustrate what I mean concerning the first one of these three points which I regard as foundation-stones that doubt cannot disturb.

Suppose you do not know where man came from; suppose you are in doubt about the Bible; suppose you do not know very much about the nature of God; suppose you do not know the details of future destiny. You do know, after all, everything that is essential to your leading here on earth an honest and true and helpful and happy human life. And the first thing, after all, that you need to do, is to lead such a life. And these other matters that you do not know about can very well afford to wait. As long as you are not in doubt about these, you need not be very much disturbed because you are in any doubt about the others.

There is no debate as to the great questions of right and wrong, as to the practical conduct of your daily life. There is debate, as I am well aware, and plenty of it, concerning the origin of our ideas of right and wrong, concerning the origin of conscience, concerning the nature of the obligation which we feel when we say "ought." There are transcendental theories, and intuitional theories, and experimental and

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scientific and philosophic theories, about right and wrong. Meantime, men and women who do not care a fig for science or philosophy know practically all they need to know to govern their daily lives.

Suppose a farmer, having got hold of the truth that all the processes of life and growth are dependent ultimately on the sun, instead of ploughing his ground and sowing his seed, should spend all his spring and summer in trying to settle the nature of the spots on the sun, the nature of the photosphere, the appearance of the sun during an eclipse, the problems raised by the transit of Venus across the face of the sun, the exact distance of the sun from the earth, the question whether the sun is an eternal storehouse of energy to be kept up age after age, or whether it is a fire burning itself away, destined to go out and leave only ashes behind. These things are immensely interesting, as it is immensely interesting to know about the nature of God and the origin of man; but the farmer does not need to settle these before he ploughs his ground and puts in his seed and reaps his crop. So we do not need to settle these great questions before we begin to live a right and noble life. There is a highway cast up, along which the feet of common men may walk. It is macadamized and plain as a turnpike, fenced in by the experience of ages, and no man need err therein. This prophecy of the prophet has come about; and it does not depend at all upon the solution of these great questions about which we have been talking, and which, to hear the discussions of the world, you would think composed the total of human knowledge.

Right and wrong do not depend on any theory of their origin. They have been wrought out by human experience. I have an old father, already feebly treading the verge of a second childhood, and appealing in the helplessness of his age to us his children for care, as pathetically as ever our infantile helplessness appealed to him. Do I need to study philosophy and science, to find out about God and the origin of the universe, before I know enough to take care of him?

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Precisely the same application you may make concerning every duty of human life. "I do not know anything," "Everything is unsettled?" You know everything that you need to know. Nothing is unsettled that need to disturb your course of life. It is only the great speculative problems that people are asking questions about. Meanwhile, you can live here in the sun, build your homes, carry on your business, help your neighbors, cast a true vote, make yourself an honest citizen, honorable in all your avocations, and live a true and happy life; and that is the great thing, after all.

Not only is this true, but there are a thousand illustrations I could point out to you of those who doubt concerning every one of these things, who are still magnificent examples of the noblest type of human culture and human character. It is sometimes said by way of taunt, that if you give up the old idea of the Bible, there will be no reason left for men to behave themselves. I saw, the other day, an argument for a particular style of keeping the Sabbath day, saying that, if this idea were broken down, civilization would be ruined. So you hear every little while that scepticism about God goes hand in hand with breaking banks and cheating your neighbors. If people would only exercise a very small modicum of common sense, they would see how absurd all this talk is.

What is right and wrong? The results of human experience touching the questions as to what course of conduct is for the happiness and welfare of men, and what is not. That is all. Has then any question of Bible, of God, of heaven or hell, anything to do with these matters? You might as well say, If I lost my faith in the Bible, I should lose my faith in the fact that fire burns, and cold congeals water. We have found those out by experience. So we have found out that lying, cheating, stealing, and all those things that we call wrong, in the long run, are not for the welfare and happiness of humanity. And, just as fast as people become sensibly selfish, they will do right for that reason, if for no other. It is only a fool who ever does

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wrong purposely; because, if he were wise, he would know it would not be for his interest in the long run to do it. These things depend on experience, and not on speculative theories.

If you look at those men whom I have referred to as doubters, you will find some magnificent illustrations of character. No nobler type of men live than that great group of scientific experts who have devoted their whole lives to the discovery of truth, and at whom are being hurled the epithets of infidel and atheist. Let me mention one or two cases. Col. Ingersoll, a man who, according to the logic used against him, ought to be the worst man in America, a little while ago went into a mining speculation, in which he lost a large sum of money. At the time he went into it, some friends who trusted in his judgment also went into the same speculation, and thus, through his influence, they also lost. Since that time,— how many others would do such a thing? — he has been buying up the stock, so far as he could get control of it, of those friends who lost their money through their faith in him, simply on the ground of his conviction that no honorable man ought, even by his influence, to lead a friend into a position from which he is not able to retire.

A few years ago, some twenty years perhaps, Mr. George William Curtis, a Liberal and a Unitarian, became involved in a money matter which left him, as he believed, honorably bound to pay $100,000, which amount he did not possess. Friends of less sensitive conscience, or looking at it from another stand-point, argued against the necessity of his meeting such a sum; but he took it upon his conscience, his heart and brain, and, after all these long years of labor, he has just succeeded in paying off the last of this immense sum that has burdened him through life.

I speak of these as illustrations of how men look upon practical questions of duty and right without regard to their theoretic speculations concerning God, man, and the future.

The next point of this practical question of right and wrong is that men need something to do, something that

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they are persuaded is worth doing well. Man is a bundle of faculties, a storehouse of energy. It needs no argument to show that it is one essential of his happiness that he should have a hopeful field for the employment of his energy and faculties. You will notice that it does not turn on any doubtful questions as to whether man shall possess such a field as this. When we look over what man has achieved on earth in the way of subduing its forces and bringing them into service to man, we must only marvel at the powers of this tiny, feeble creature, flung naked into the wilderness, which he has made to blossom as the rose. I sometimes wish I could, about the twentieth century, revisit this earth, and look over the world in a bright morning, and see how much more and grander things he has done.

There is field for the endless exercise of efforts and energy and labor in the cause of truth. There is enough to make us earnest and devoted; and, when we stop to listen, the whisper of the coming ages appeals to us to make this age noble and grand, so as to lead it on and lift it up into the grander possibilities of the future. All these things are utterly independent of any speculative questions whatsoever. A field for hopeful work, then, is the second essential to a successful and happy life.

There is one thing more,—something to hope for. You remember the old fable of the Pandora box, and how Hope alone was left in the grasp of man. Hope has never deserted the race. But hope never gleamed a fairer and more luring image than it does to-day before the human heart; a hope not only for the conquest of this world, but a hope, as I look at it, that seems to step over the edge of the round world and to float in the atmosphere of the infinite life. I believe that this fact of hope must be accounted for before we can afford to bury it, and say that it has no meaning. Hope has been born out of human experience. The universe has given it to us. If we can trust the universe to be anything but a sham and a lie, then hope is big with promise of immortality.

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the career of a highwayman, that all the newspapers in the country should take so much pains to tell so much about the criminal; and it makes them feel that it is worth while to be that kind of a hero rather than lead a life of humdrum, honest obscurity.

One word in closing. I have made myself very poorly understood, if I have given the impression that the newspaper, on the whole, is doing more harm than good, or even if I should leave the impression that it is doing the thousandth part of the harm that it does good. I believe that it is an engine of incalculable power; and that, in the main and in the long run, its power is exerted for the enlightenment and lifting up of mankind. I believe that it only needs that public opinion should be so developed as to make it a losing process for any newspaper to be guilty of these things I have indicated. It only needs this to make it what it claims to be, the most potent factor in moulding and guiding the life of the modern world.

And we, of all others, have reason to rejoice in this. For the modern newspaper, in diffusing the latest teaching of science, in revealing the religious condition of other races, past and present, in scattering knowledge common to the few best thinkers of the world so as to make it the common property of men, is preaching our gospel and doing our work. If true to this function, it cannot help preaching the gospel, first, of intelligence,— wide, free, fearless intelligence; and then the gospel of the public good, which means, translated into Biblical phrase, the gospel of everlasting righteousness.

Father, we ask that thy light and thy guidance may be ours, and that we, in our homes and in our daily living, may seek to encourage and elevate that which is best in the public influences of the time, thus making it easy for them to succeed, making it impossible for them to enter the path of wrong. So may we do our part toward correcting the evils that we recognize; and thus hasten on the coming of the true and the good over all the earth. Amen.

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THE REIGN OF THE DEAD.*

THE dominance of the dead world over the living one; the good and the evil of it; its influence on human progress; the extent to which and the methods by which we may modify this dominance and assert our own living power to-day,— these are the thoughts around which I shall group such suggestions as I have to offer you this morning.

There is a cloud in the sky over our heads to-day. That cloud is of a definite size and density, containing a definite amount of moisture. It is held in its position just where it is by a peculiar and precise condition of the atmosphere, and made in all its parts to be just precisely what it is, and not something else, by the preceding forces that have wrought upon it and the conditions that surround it.

In order that this cloud should be smaller or larger by a hand-breadth, in order that it should be rarer or denser in the slightest degree, in order that it should contain one drop more or less of moisture, in order that it should be swayed from the precise place it occupies by the distance of an inch, in order that it should be in any respect other than it precisely is, we should have to suppose a change in the past order of things, extending through last night, through yesterday, through last week, last year, the last century, the last millennium, clear on to the time when our earth as a ring of cosmic vapor was flung off from its parent globe, the sun. If anywhere along this line of cause and effect, from any supposed beginning until to-day, there had been the slightest shadow of a shade of variation that would have

* Phonographically reported by B. C. Barrows.

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fledglings who seemed all mouth, as, with wide-open beaks, they waited for their food, looking the very ideal embodiment of hunger? Have you never, in a country cellar or some other shaded spot, seen a pale plant creeping along with almost conscious eagerness to find a sunny place where it might satisfy its longing for light?

What now is the meaning of these and kindred facts, except that all life hungers for nutriment on which it may feed itself and grow? In a growing world, then, hunger of all kinds and all grades and all degrees of intensity must exist. Plants must hunger for moisture, flowers for light, bodies for food, minds for truth, and hearts for love. Now, just as the eye implies its correlative, light, so I believe that every human hunger implies the existence of that for which it craves. This does not mean of course that every hunger will be satisfied, or indeed that it ought to be. For appetites may be perverted and seek such things as are harmful; appetites may be misinterpreted, while both soul and body seek such things as are not capable of giving satisfaction; and, even though the hunger be legitimate, the sources of supply may be for the time unattainable. But, in spite of all exceptions or perversions, hunger and supply are the twin conditions of all growth. And in this world of man, such as we know it to be, the hunger must always not only precede the supply, but outrun it, and so create the demand that shall stimulate to activity, enterprise, discovery, labor, which in turn must create new supply. Though at any particular point of time all wants were satisfied, yet the first step of growth would mean new wants, and thus hungers unsatisfied. For, though an abundant possibility of supply should always exist, still this possibility must ever be turned into fact, and the materials be properly distributed. One of two things, then, must always happen; and, in accordance with these, one or the other of two philosophies of life must be adopted.

Men may rest content with a few things easily obtained; or, if not content, may not be willing to pay the price of the effort needed to obtain a larger supply. Or, on the other

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hand, listening to a thousand unsatisfied desires, the world may set to work to create a world large enough and affluent enough to match the demands of its growing life. In the one case, it will hold and teach a philosophy of repression; in the other, a philosophy of development. Indeed, not philosophies only, but whole religions, have been organized on the basis of these opposing tendencies.

For example, Buddhism is the religion of repression. It sprang up in the midst of a civilization that seemed to mock all human hopes, and to teach men that their many hungers were only illusions destined to end in perpetual disappointment. Gautama therefore taught his followers that the true end of life was the repression of all desire. Desire was painful; and, since its satisfaction was only a vain hope, it necessarily led to unhappiness. It was therefore, he taught, the root and essence of all evil. Cease to desire, crush out all hope and all fear and all care, and the soul would then enter Nirvana, the heaven of absolute rest.

The modern philosophy of pessimism, chiefly developed in Germany, and connected with the great names of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, teaches substantially the same creed. Consciousness makes it possible for men to feel desire; and since desire is impossible of fulfilment, and can therefore lead only to pain, it follows that consciousness itself is an evil. Thus, it holds that the only hopeful future lies in the discovery of some method by which all consciousness may be extinguished. When hunger ceases, want also will cease, and the mistake of conscious existence will be rectified.

But the whole genius of our western civilization is diametrically opposed to this. And, out of this opposite belief, all our modern civilization has sprung. Men cultivate desires, and then bend all the energies of the world to attain their satisfaction. They read in the New Testament, "Be content with such things as ye have"; but not one in ten thousand thinks of paying any attention to it. They yield a languid assent on Sunday, and then devote the other six

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days of the week to a vigorous demonstration of the fact that they take no practical stock in any such doctrine. For what is our whole modern American life but the eager opening of a million mouths, and the reaching out of a million hands in the effort to grasp the objects for which we hunger? "Take no anxious thought" for these things? We do nothing else but take thought.

Let us now glance briefly at a few of the world's unsatisfied hungers, and see if we can discover the lessons they ought to teach.

1. The hunger for bread is, of course, the hunger for physical life. And from the day, ages and ages ago, when the first men began to dispute the spontaneous products of the earth with the beasts and the birds, until now, the hunger has somewhere exceeded the supply. The gaunt figure of hunger has stalked the earth, the pinched features of famine have accused the apparent niggardliness of nature, and the wailing of children crying for food has re-echoed back from the unanswering heavens. And yet the old earth has always answered, when intelligently appealed to. Her storehouse contains enough, if only men learn to open her secret doors.

It has been a hard necessity; and yet this stern-faced necessity and niggard giver has been the bounteous bestower of grander things than all she has withheld. Look at some tropic island where man has only to shelter himself under the bread-fruit tree, drink the cocoa-milk, and eat the bounty that falls ripe into his lazily outstretched hand. In such a picture you see perpetual barbarism,—no motive to progress, only the stagnant life of the lotus-eaters in a land

"In which it seemed always afternoon."

Accepting here for illustration the truth of the Eden myth, —and we may justly say that the best thing that ever happened to the race was the driving of Adam from Paradise, —we will thank Eve for her disobedience; we will smile at the impotent curse of labor, knowing it to be a blessing;

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and we will say frankly that the serpent told the truth when he said that the eating of the forbidden fruit meant life instead of death. Hunger and labor have been the twin angels to lead man out of the wilderness of barbarism where he was born, and teach him to turn the earth into a garden. The curse, then, instead of destroying, has created the only Eden man has ever known, and will create fairer still in the future.

2. It has been always a fashion for religion to decry and condemn man's unsatisfied hunger for power. In the lower grades of civilization, we will grant that the results of this desire for domination were not beautiful. Tennyson is not far wrong, when he speaks of the gigantic struggles of the

> "Dragons of the prime
> That tare each other in their slime,"

and pictures nature "red in tooth and claw." But, even then, would it have been any better, if the poorer and weaker had triumphed, and so transmitted a worse world instead of a better? This natural law of the victory of the strong and the "survival of the fittest" is not the cruel thing it is often painted by those who only note its superficial significance. When it came to the battle of tribe with tribe and nation with nation, the strongest then was generally the relatively best; and out of such winning the world got on.

But a time came when it was no longer the struggle of mere brute force. Mind became stronger than muscle; and thought climbed the throne, and seized the sceptre. And then another forward step was taken, under the guidance of this same law; and the moral sense of collective humanity became stronger than intellect. So that now, in the great nations of the world, in the long run, conscience asserts its rights as king over both brute force and mind. Even the mightiest governments have to bring their deeds, both of war and peace, before the world's judgment-seat for sentence; and they dare not disregard the verdict.

What then? Why, this. The world's age-long hunger for power has turned from selfish domination to the universal

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service of man. He that will be great must now be servant. And the same power that used to devastate now organizes the world's commerce, explores the heavens, dredges the deep seas for their secrets, tunnels earth's mountains, and converts her deserts into cities and her forests into gardens. The hunger for power, then, is a hunger for the elevation and the service of man.

3. As resistless as either of these has been the world's hunger for truth. All the way up the ages, the attempt has been repeated, over and over again, to make men content with such driblets of supposed knowledge as the various revelations and infallibilities have chosen to dole out to them. They have been repeatedly told to be quiet and satisfied with the ordinary routine of earthly duties; for that "secret things belong to God." They have been fenced round with a little scheme of the universe, and hedged in with a fence of dogmas, and told that they must not even attempt to know more than was thus revealed. At the gates of knowledge have been stationed mythical dragons, angels with flaming swords, and threats of endless pains. But the desire for the fruit of "the tree of knowledge" has overborne them all. Men have broken through the hedges of dogma, they have shattered the schemes of the universe all the way from the baby-house of the Jews up to the enclosing crystal spheres of Ptolemy. They have defied the dragons, and dared the penalties of hell. The deathless hunger for truth has asserted itself against all opposition. Always has the brave race been singing: —

O star of truth, down shining
  Through clouds of doubt and fear,
I ask but 'neath your guidance
  My pathway may appear.
However long the journey,
  How hard soe'er it be,
Though I be lorn and weary,
  Lead on, I'll follow thee!

Though loving friends forsake me,
  Or plead with me in tears,

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Though angry foes may threaten,
  To shake my soul with fears,
Still to my high allegiance
  I may not faithless be:
Through life, through death, forever,
  Lead on, I'll follow thee!

Comte, in the name of science, may tell the world that certain things can never be discovered; secularism and agnosticism may tell us that we cannot know the universe's secret, and that we may as well be content with beefsteak and potatoes and our physical comfort; religion may keep on asking, "Can man by searching find out God?"—still the answer rings out through every age: "Excelsior! On! Up! We may perish by the way; but we will never cease the attempt!" To sleep, even with truth for pillow, is not so grand and noble as this eternal search.

And, under the impulse of this truth-hunger, the search will go on. It is no use telling men they can never reach the North Pole: they *will* reach it. It is no use telling them they cannot discover the origin of man: they will either do it or try forever. It is no use telling them that God is unsearchable, and that they had best take their ease and sleep, and rest their brains in the Church of Rome or the Church of America. The God-thirst possesses their souls, and the infinite lure is mightier than any siren song of peace or any threat of endless torment. And all the accumulated knowledge of the world is the fruit of the conquests that this hunger has wrought.

4. There is one hunger more that deserves our attention, and this is the desire for love. The physical basis of this is at once the life and the bane of the world. Right well do the French call it the "Grand Passion." The mightiest forces, when misdirected, will, of necessity, work the greatest mischief. When analyzed, this love is the race-hunger for life, for perpetuity. Being as it is the mightiest and most universal of all human forces, it is only natural that it should have wrought the most fearful and far-reaching results of evil. It has devastated not only individual lives, but kingdoms.

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Not only has it undermined homes, it has overthrown dynasties.

But not only this. Beyond all other agencies, it has been the active force that has created and built the temple of human happiness. And this temple it has decorated with art and made musical with song. It is the inspiration of all the world's beauty, and the most potent agent in all its good. But what tragedies it has created, and what loneliness of life has witnessed to its power!

Let us glance at a few of its specific manifestations. Open the world's great poems. From the sweet bird-songs of spring to the mighty music of Dante, wailing through hell, moaning the plaintive dawn of hope through purgatory, and swelling into the inexpressible ecstasy of paradise,—all is inspired by love and its deathless hunger. What drama was ever acted, what story was ever written, what painting ever touched the human heart, what opera ever thrilled the world, but the unsatisfied hunger of love was not the pivot-point of all?

Note the world's great sisterhoods of mercy, the tender women who shrink not from the horrors of battlefields or the worse horrors of plague-infected hospitals; and, when you read the secret of this devotion, you will find it in the unsatisfied hunger of woman's love. Finding not its natural outlet in the direction of husband or child, it turns all its divine streams of tenderness and healing along the parched wastes of human suffering and desolation.

Go into the thousands of homes, where either husband or wife has on his or her face the look of hunger that tells of a life-hope disappointed and of a heart unfed, and find the explanation here. And here are a thousand dangers. Either the wife or the husband hungers, and is not satisfied. One side of the husband's nature the wife fails utterly to appreciate or feel any sympathy for. Or the wife has two or three rooms in her being to which the husband has never found the key. And it is so hard for us to make allowance for a taste we do not possess or see any reason in what we

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do not care for! And thus arise jarrings and misunderstandings and lonely hours of longing. And, here, two practical suggestions ought to give us help. Having learned the humbling lesson of the limitations of our own natures and requirements, let us beware of making our tastes and feelings and wants the measure or rule for others. Let us learn that another's want may be as legitimate or reasonable as our own, though we may not share or even understand it. And then, while we may not claim for ourselves or concede to others the right of feeding our unfed home hungers in illegitimate ways outside, still let us remember that there are legitimate and wholesome springs outside the home where longing hearts may quench their thirst. So may we learn to curb our selfishness and jealousy, so as to enable us to be glad that those we love may find help and joy from sources that we may not be able personally to supply.

From the unfed hungers of the world, it is true that unnumbered woes have sprung. And, on this account, the system of the world is often accused as evil. And, perhaps while we suffer, we must feel that a power that makes or lets us suffer cannot be kind. But when we forget ourselves, and calmly read the lesson of human history, we cannot fail to see that these unsatisfied hungers of man have been the mainsprings of human progress. Hunger, then, is not only pain, it is prophecy. If the divine voice declares, "Blessed are those that hunger," it also adds, "they shall be filled." All hunger is called out by and it reaches after some reality.

May we not then feel that the hunger for life, for the ideal, for the forever unattained, is a promise written by the divine finger in the soul of man, that points toward an endless life? When I hear Holmes sing,

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul";

when I see that man's history has been

> One age-long, endless struggle
> The unattained to gain,

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The ever-onward reaching,
And reaching still in vain;

when I hear the voice of Whittier chanting,

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees";

when I see Tennyson

"Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God";

and listen while he cries,

"I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And faintly trust the larger hope,"

and hear him voice that hope in the words that "every winter" shall "change to spring,"—at such times, I cannot but believe that the world's age-long, unsatisfied hunger for continued life and perfect good shall somewhen, somewhere, be satisfied.

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PROGRESS AND POVERTY.*

THE problem for the industrial world to solve consists really of four parts: First, there must be abundant production for the supply of all the material wants of the people in any particular country. In the next place, there must be something like a fair and equitable distribution of those products, so that each member of society shall obtain something near the share to which he is entitled by the services which he has rendered. Added to this, if society is to make any advance, there must be a constant increase in the total quantity of the wants of society. And not only must there be an increase in quantity, but an elevation in quality. That is, people ought progressively to want more things and better things. Along with this increase and elevation of wants, there must, of course, be a parallel increase in product, or in ability to supply these wants. These four things then are necessary,— enough for all, an equitable distribution of this abundance, an increase and elevation of wants, and a progressive increase in supply. These four things constitute what we mean by an advancing civilization.

We learn from history that the human race in its progress has passed through four grand phases of industrial life. It has taken on successively four types or methods of industrial production. I do not mean that all the world at once has been engaged in one of these, and then that it has been engaged in the next, and then in the third and fourth. For, if we take any particular period in the history of the world, we shall find that these methods are mixed, mingled, and overlapping each other. And yet the four are so distinct,

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WHAT IS ORTHODOXY?*

To attempt to answer this question with any fulness would demand more time than I have at my disposal and more patience than you possess.

What is Orthodoxy, as defined by itself? I will give you, as clearly and as simply as I can, some of the changing phases of Orthodoxy as it has passed down the ages from the first until now, and then follow with a few brief reflections of my own.

We are being told, on all hands and every little while, that Unitarianism, liberalism, the scientific religion of the modern world, or that general movement which we all know is referred to when either of these terms is used, however it may be defined,—that this is indefinite, that we do not know what we believe, that we are not ready to answer the great questions of human nature, human life, and human destiny. The assumption on the other hand is that Orthodoxy has an answer, and a satisfactory one, to all these questions, and is ready to give that answer to any comer. We are told again that, unless we accept the orthodox faith, the orthodox scheme of the universe and of man, we are in imminent danger of eternal loss. We are told in general terms that we must accept it, if we are to be saved. Yet I am well aware—and I speak of this so as not to be charged with unfairness—that there are men and churches, here and there, who, in regard to specific cases, are ready to make exceptions, and say that it is possible that this man or that man may be saved in some special way, although he may doubt or deny outright some part of the orthodox scheme. We are told

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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again that this scheme has been divinely given, that it is the eternal and unchanging truth. As the Rev. R. S. Storrs, of Brooklyn, says,— and, in saying it, he only echoes the words of equally good authorities on that side,— Orthodoxy is incapable of change or progress, in the modern sense of the word, for the simple reason that it is only a transcript of the eternal and unchanging mind of God. If it be that, of course it must be changeless and should be eternal.

In view of these statements that are made, I wish to trace for a little what Orthodoxy has been, and then find out, if I can,— but this is a very difficult task,— what it is to-day, that we may see if it is so much more definite than our beliefs; that we may see if it has the evidence upon it of being the transcript of the eternal and changeless mind of Deity; that we may see whether it stands on such a basis of authority as to give it the right to say that it holds in its hands the keys of eternal destiny.

Orthodoxy,— what is it in a word? What does the word itself mean? It means the true doctrine. But what is the true doctrine? Practically, as applied in the history of human beliefs, and especially in the history of the beliefs of Christian nations and peoples, it means the belief of the majority. That is practically what it comes to. It is the belief which has been agreed upon as being true by the largest number of people, and which has been formulated and expressed in creeds and symbols.

Now let us go back to the beginning, and inquire what was Orthodoxy in the time of Christ, and for the first few centuries of the Christian era? Such a thing as Orthodoxy, in the modern sense of the word, did not exist till at least three hundred and twenty-five years after the time of Christ. So, if it were necessary for men to be orthodox in order to be saved, it is a serious question as to what has become of all the people who lived before the Nicene Council made and settled the Church's creed. While Jesus was alive, and for the first few years after his death, if any one had raised the question, "What constitutes a Christian?" the answer would not have

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been some particular belief about God, whether he were three persons or one. It would not have been any particular belief about man, his origin, nature, and whether he had fallen or not. It would not have been any particular belief concerning an atonement, whether any atonement was necessary, or whether God could or would forgive without an atonement, or whether this or that theory of atonement were true,— none of these questions. He would not have been asked as to his belief concerning a future life,— whether there was any, in the ordinary sense of that word; whether persons continued to live after the body dies, or whether they were only to live again after the resurrection; or whether the future existence, which was generally believed in, was to be on some other planet or in the mid heavens or here on a regenerated earth. None of these questions would have been raised as essential.

What, then, was the distinction between a Jew and a Christian? In the first years of Christianity, nothing but this: The Jew was one who kept the whole ceremonial law of Moses, accepting the authority of the old dispensation. He believed that a Messiah of some kind was to come, but denied that he had come. A Christian was a man who believed that Jesus was this expected Messiah, and that thus he had come already. This, and this only, constituted the distinction between the Jew and the Christian for the first few years of the history of Christianity.

When we find that famous eunuch riding in his chariot and reading the Old Testament scriptures, going on his way toward the southern kingdom in which he was an important officer, and Philip, the evangelist, sitting beside him, interpreting the scriptures to him, and the eunuch asks whether he cannot be baptized, the only question which is raised is whether he believes this; and, when he says he does, the chariot is stopped, and he is initiated into the Christian Church. This, then, was the only point that constituted the Orthodoxy of that time.

Now let us come down a little later. We then find a curi-

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ous condition of things, though one not strange, considering human nature and its tendencies in all ages. In the first hundred or two years of the Christian Church, we find the Church rent asunder, divided by minor factions in regard to a hundred things, rent in twain by a controversy represented on the one side by James and Peter, having behind them the old first church of Jerusalem, and on the other hand by the flaming missionary Paul. What was this about? The Judaizing Christians said, You must not only believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but you must keep the Mosaic law, or you will not be saved. But Paul said, Believe in Christ only, and you need not pay any attention to the Jewish law. He fought against this whole conception of the ceremonial which had been imposed on the world for ages, and broke it down and set the world free. He said to all, You can come into the Christian Church simply by believing that Jesus is the Messiah. Pay no attention to what they tell you about keeping the Mosaic law; that is not at all essential.

Here then was the Church divided into these two extremes, two contradictory factions, two rivals, concerning which it was difficult to tell which would carry the day.

For three hundred years there was no end of Gospels written and published, teaching all sorts of doctrine. They taught different doctrines concerning the nature of God, the nature and origin of Christ, the conditions of salvation; but there was no general consensus of belief which any one was obliged to accept until the Council met at Nicea, in the summer of the year 325. This Council was made up — it seems a little strange to think that we do not know even the number of its membership when there was such an important subject before them — of only two or three hundred members. Some historians say two hundred and eighteen, some give as many as three hundred and twenty. They met and formulated this famous Nicene Creed. What were the influences under which this was done? Was there any calm investigation as to what was true? Was there any search for proof, or any attempt to offer evidence? Was

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there any critical spirit brought into that assembly which was performing one of the most important and solemn acts in the history of the Christian Church? So far as we can learn, there was no attempt made to discover concerning one single doctrine whether they had the slightest shred of what the modern world would regard as evidence in its support; not one. There never was a Republican or Democratic convention where there was more demagogism, more of what we should in modern phrase call "bulldozing," where there was more violence, more indignity offered by man to man, less of reverence, less of calm truth-seeking, less of any quality that we should regard as essential to the deliberations of an important assembly like that. It was simply a scramble on the part of this faction and that to get its peculiar view accepted by the majority. There was falsification of votes, bribery, intimidation, and everything that could disgrace a modern caucus present in this Council of Nicea. And, when they had at last decided on what was to be regarded as the opinion of the majority, the weight of the Emperor Constantine's sceptre was placed in that scale as the deciding element. Why? We have Constantine's own word for it that he decided that this should be the orthodox doctrine; not because he had looked it up at all, not on account of any opinion as to what was true, or because he cared a fig for what was true. He waited to see which was the majority; and then he took their side for the simple reason, as he tells us, that he wished to establish a uniform system of belief throughout his empire, and that was the easiest way to attain his end.

Here, then, in the midst of such conditions and through the clashing of such forces was the first orthodoxy of the world born, in the modern sense of that word.

The next great creed of Christendom was what is called the Apostles' Creed. Perhaps some of you may be a little astonished that I did not mention this first. If it were really the creed of the apostles, that would naturally come first, standing at the head of the long order of statements of

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belief that have represented the thoughts of the ages. But, as a matter of fact, I mention it second because it was second. The Apostles' Creed, in the shape in which we have it to-day, cannot be found anywhere earlier than the eighth century. Yet two years ago, when I was coming home from Europe, there was a young theologian on board, the *protégé* of a bishop, who told me that the Apostles' Creed was formulated by the apostles themselves, the twelve sections of which it is made up each being spoken by one of the apostles, and that in this shape it was put together. And I suppose there are a great many ministers in this country and Europe who really suppose that to be the case. Yet the apostles, so to speak, did not have any creed until they had been dead six or seven hundred years; or any that was known to the world.

The next great creed is that which goes by the name of Athanasius. And here again you will be a little astonished at the facts. Athanasius was the most prominent figure in the Council of Nicea; and yet the creed called by his name, and which was supposed by the Church for hundreds of years to be the work of this famous theologian, was not generally known throughout Christendom until near the year one thousand. And it is admitted to-day by the best orthodox scholars and the creed historians that this was a deliberate fraud and falsification. The Athanasian Creed which dares, speaking in the name of God, to say that no doubt he who does not believe every article of it shall be damned everlastingly, which dares to come forward as representing the faith of Christendom and to speak as by the lips of the Lord himself, was a deliberate fraud foisted on the annals of the Church three or four or five hundred years after Athanasius was dead.

These were the creed symbols — these three — of Catholic Orthodoxy. Now let me sum up what was the Orthodoxy of Catholic Christendom, and what it is to-day.

You are aware perhaps that the Catholic Church claims that it believes only that which has been believed by every-

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body, always, everywhere,— that is the phrase. Of course, by that they mean within the limits of Christendom. They represent, they say, the universal belief of Christendom. They claim to stand for Christendom itself, regarding all other Churches as minor defections and heresies. The Catholic Church believed in its own supremacy, its own infallibility, its own right to dominate the thought, the art, and the life of the world. They must believe it. If the Catholic Church be really God's vicegerent on earth, reigning in his name and by his authority, it must have omnipotence and infallibility at its back.

Along with this, they believed all that you are familiar with as making up the Orthodoxy of the Protestant Churches, with a few minor distinctions; and, besides that,— and allow me to say I regard some of these ideas as decided improvements on Protestant Orthodoxy,— they believed in the deity of Mary, in a broader hope for the future than Protestantism, in purgatory, and in the intercession of the saints. They believed, on the other hand, in the omnipresence and the eternal and universal interference of devils in human affairs. They believed that it is possible to transfer merit and guilt from man to man, and this they represented by their doctrine of the communion of saints. They believed that it is possible to purchase pardon, that the Church has the right to represent a sort of human brokerage concerning divine affairs. This was Catholic Orthodoxy; and it was against these corruptions and immoralities and the more glaring intellectual deformities that Luther and his confrères revolted; so that theirs was really a great battle for human freedom.

But the Protestant Church, while it sloughed off some of the good things and some of the evil things of the Catholic Church, kept the essential doctrines which constitute that great scheme of the world and of human destiny which is so wrought in and bound up along with the destiny and the future of Christianity. Calvin, for example,— and he was the greatest theologian of Protestantism, either ancient or mod-

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ern,— wrote his *Institutes* when he was no more than twenty-five years of age; and yet no man ever did more to shape the thought and mould and control the destiny of Protestant Christendom. He believed and taught foreordination: that everything is fixed and determined in the mind of God from the first; that nothing happens except what God means shall happen, either good, bad, or indifferent. He believed in total depravity, the fall of man, in unconditional election,— that this man and that man are chosen out of the world to be saved without any regard to what they have ever done or been, simply at the dictation of God's own will and pleasure. He believed in a limited atonement. God in Calvin's scheme is economical: there was no use in providing an atonement for those who are not to be saved, so there is no atonement provided except for the elect. He believed in the "effectual calling"; that is, the spirit comes forth, and selects and calls, in a compulsory way, the person who has been chosen, and he cannot resist or help himself. Though he should try, yet the spirit effectually turns him. This implies the "perseverance of the saints," a perseverance in spite of themselves; and they cannot help it. This is true also of those who are not saved. This is Calvin's scheme in its essentials, and the backbone of Protestantism in some form or other as it exists to-day. And when these essentials, or any one of them, are taken out, then the scheme must fall, like an arch when the key-stone is removed.

The belief, then, that man has fallen, that hopeless and eternal ruin is ahead of him, and that only those that accept the atonement through Christ, and are called and converted by his spirit, are to be saved, and that all the rest are to be lost,— this, in essence, to-day is Orthodoxy, and has been all through the ages.

But there have been some remarkable influences at work and some remarkable changes going on in this modern world, and to these I must now call your attention.

Until within a hundred years, Orthodoxy has been that definite, consistent, logical scheme of the universe and of

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man that it has claimed to be. There never was a finer piece of logic than that wrought out by Calvin, and which has been called by his name. Give him his premises, and you must follow him even to the lowest hell. There is no escape from the logical grip of his argument in his definite, consistent scheme of the universe and man. But if we look around us within the last one hundred years, and more especially within the last fifty or twenty-five years, we shall find the most marked and startling changes going on. That which has been fixed and which seemed as unchanging as the everlasting hills begins to dissolve. Here is an important feature of it: we look at it, and it seems fixed as a headland that stands out in the ocean and defies the power of the beating waves. You look again, you wonder if you were mistaken; it has disappeared like a mirage, or like a cloud when the sun comes up. The whole thing has become a dissolving view. Now, you see something: you look again, and you see it no more.

Let me give a few illustrations of what I mean by this. The intelligence of the world has been growing, and has raised a question concerning the truth of a doctrine. It has asked for proof, and the proof has not been forthcoming. The moral sense, the tenderness and love of the world, have been growing; and they have refused to believe certain things that seemed too horrible for human credence, and so they have flung them away. Professor George P. Fisher, within a year, has written an article in the *North American Review* in reply to the arguments used by Colonel Ingersoll. He reduces Christianity to its lowest terms, and states those things which he considers will stand and must stand, if Christianity itself is to endure. These are the essential sinfulness of man, the necessity for an atonement, the substantial accuracy of the Bible, the salvation only of those who are saved through the influence and work of Christ, and the eternal loss of those who are not thus saved. This is, in substance, the Christianity of Professor Fisher, of Yale.

A little while ago, a young man appeared before an exam-

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ining council in Quincy, Ill., to be settled as a minister. The council examined him, and decided that he was not orthodox, and refused to settle him. What was to be done? The church was very anxious to have him. They did not give up the battle. They called another council. This council pronounced him orthodox, and settled him. That is, Orthodoxy in Quincy, Ill., depends upon who constitutes the council.

Dr. Smyth, who was settled in Quincy, is later elected as Professor at Andover. He comes before the Board of Examiners, and they decide that he is not orthodox enough for Andover, and refuse to admit him. But he goes down to New Haven; and there is a great council called to decide whether he is orthodox enough to follow the great leader of New England Orthodoxy, Dr. Bacon. They decide that he is, and settle him. That is, he is orthodox enough for New Haven, but not orthodox enough for Andover. So, again, the question of what is orthodox becomes not a matter of geographical locality perhaps, but a matter which differs according to who are the judges to decide.

I have in mind a great many personal instances illustrating this same thing. I had a friend in an orthodox church, himself a D.D., who lived and died in the orthodox church, a pastor of the two great churches in two great cities, and he told me once that his trinity amounted merely to this: the first person in the trinity was the universal spirit, omnipresent in nature; the second was Christ, by which he meant only that Jesus was a manifestation within the sphere of humanity of the divineness that we associate with the name of God; and the third person — "Well," he said, "*I do not know that I have any third person.* The Father does not mean anything to me." He did not believe in eternal punishment nor the infallibility of the Bible. I wondered as I talked with him why I was not orthodox too.

I have another friend who is settled now as a member of an orthodox church, who bears a name that is famous throughout this country. He has recently been called to a

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larger city and larger church. I know from personal conversation with him that, if he is orthodox at all, he is simply so on one point of the creed; that the rest he holds no more than I do.

Mr. Beecher, in his recent *North American Review* article, speaking of Orthodoxy, as he understands it, declares not only his rejection, but his indignant, his scornful and contemptuous rejection of almost every single point of the old Orthodoxy, with one bare, solitary exception. He goes so far as to say that, if there were no belief at all left in the world, it would be better than the old belief. And I heard him at the Spencer dinner in New York, the other day, say that it would not be twenty years before there would not be an intelligent orthodox minister in America who would not be ashamed to confess that he ever believed these old doctrines.

Dr. Thomas, of Chicago, a personal friend of mine, still claims to be a Methodist, though he has been pronounced a heretic by one section of that denomination. He still claims to speak for Orthodoxy, and says in reply to Ingersoll that eternal punishment is no part of Orthodoxy, and it is unfair to charge it upon it as one of its beliefs. So it becomes a serious question as to what Orthodoxy is.

My last illustration is the famous Professor Park, the one who stood as representing New England Orthodoxy so many years at Andover. He raises the question as to what a man ought to believe, in order to become a Congregational minister; and he reduces the absolute essentials to three. And, by the way, he says: We must stop somewhere. Congregationalism cannot give up everything: it has given up one thing after another. It must stop somewhere. He says a man who proposes to be ordained must believe in the Bible. To what extent? He must believe in the accuracy of the Bible, when it is talking about religion and morals. If he doubts its chronology, its geology, its history, that may pass. He may believe that Moses and Isaiah and Paul were mistaken in their assertions about science, chronology, etc.; they may have blundered everywhere else, but he must

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believe that they were absolutely infallible when they were talking about religion. That is, the Bible is infallible everywhere, except where you can bring it to a test. We have found it was full of mistakes where we can test it; but still we must believe that, where we cannot test it, it is right.

How would you like that in a business way? Here is a man, a neighbor and friend. You have found out that his opinions are worth nothing on any point you have time to investigate, but he expects you to believe him implicitly in those points that you have not investigated. Would you be willing to do it? Professor Park says you must believe the Bible in that way.

Next, he must believe in the doctrine of the atonement; and, here, he gives his own view of the atonement. There have been some fifteen or twenty different views of the atonement; but this is the common New England view, that Christ, somehow, as a substitute, represents the eternal punishment of those to be saved, and thus is satisfactory to God. All who believe on him, and accept his merit and work, may be saved.

The third point, that he must believe in order to enter the Orthodox Church, is the eternal damnation of everybody not saved according to the Andover method.

It seems to me so strange, I marvel as to what can be the constituent elements of the brains and hearts of these men. You must believe this, they say. There is no suggestion of hope for the future. And yet, while I marvel, I see the consistency of the position. The very minute that a doubt is allowed to enter concerning eternal punishment, the whole scheme and fabric are undermined. For, if there is no hell, then the whole mechanism that has been prepared to deliver men from it is uncalled for: so that, as a matter of fact, an endless hell is the very corner-stone and foundation of the orthodox system; and it cannot stand without it.

And, still, there are ministers on every hand who have thrown up the belief in the fallen nature of man, who go right on as if nothing had happened. They have given up

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their belief in the trinity, yet they go right on as if nothing had happened. They have given up their belief in the atonement and in everlasting punishment, yet they go right on in the Orthodox Church as though nothing had happened. And yet Professor Park is logically right, when he says that these doctrines together make a system, and, if one be taken away, the whole system falls. Logically, that is true; and the reason why they seem to stand, and do not fall, is because men are not logical and rational enough, after they have said two times two, to go on and say that the result is four.

You may judge then from these specimens whether the orthodox scheme seems to be crumbling and giving way on this side and that; whether it is this definite, consistent, logical scheme that it was for years and years. If I had time, I could give the reason why it is that this change has come about in the modern world, why it did not come before and why it could not, why it comes now, and must keep coming until the system has crumbled into dust. The shape which Orthodoxy assumes to-day reminds me strikingly of that famous scene in "Hamlet" where Hamlet and Polonius are conversing together, and the obsequious courtier sees everything through the eyes of the Prince: —

Hamlet.— Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Polonius.— By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Hamlet.— Methinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius.— It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet.— Or like a whale?

Polonius.— Very like a whale.

And so you can look through the lens of this man or that at this definite, changeless scheme of eternal truth; and it looks like a camel, a weasel, a whale, or whatever you please, according to the eyes that you borrow, or the philosophical standpoint you occupy.

Perhaps by this you are ready for the remark that in religion, in science, in philosophy, in art, in government,

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any "Orthodoxy" must of itself be an absurdity, must of necessity be false, and an obstruction to human progress. Why, just think of it. Would you go even to the city of Boston,—and we talk about this as the modern Athens, as one of the most enlightened cities; and undoubtedly the average intelligence is as high as in any city on the planet, —would you in Boston take a majority vote for the purpose of deciding the truth or falsity of any great question in the world?

If you did, would not you feel quite certain that you had made a wrong decision? It is never the opinion of the majority that decides. It is not the opinion of the majority that decides questions in regard to art, music, government, right, and truth. You may settle it in your mind that the majority opinion in the world is always wrong in regard to the settlement of any of these great questions; for the simple reason that the majority has least of the best thought and the most critical judgment. Thus the creed of any Orthodoxy must in the nature of things, in a growing world and with a progressive humanity, be perishable.

I want now very calmly and plainly to express my opinion of Orthodoxy as a system. If you should find such a scheme of the world and man, his origin and destiny, in any book except the Bible, among the imaginings of any people except our own, what would your judgment concerning it be? It seems to me purely pitiable, contemptible, horrible. In all sincerity, in all calmness, with all reverence, I say that I cannot conceive a scheme of the universe more outrageous in its bearing on the intelligence and moral sense of man than this: that God, all-wise, almighty, all-loving, as they say, should have created a universe, and then at the very outset have arranged things so that his own children should stumble into everlasting ruin; and he knew it, and intended it, or permitted it; that, then, he should let them go on and multiply until there were thousands or millions of them, when he knew that he should be obliged to drown them out to be rid of them, like rats infesting a house; and then let them mul-

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tiply again through ages and ages, and should only give a little light to a fragment of them, and leave the rest to wander off in darkness, knowing that they were pouring like a torrent over a precipice into ruin, every day and every moment,— making such miserable work in training even his own peculiar people that they were perpetually worshipping false gods and being perpetually punished for it. And after he had come to the earth in his own person, and lived here thirty years, suffered and died for man, he let eighteen centuries go by, and only a fragment of the world ever heard anything about the fact that he had been here. And that he should have revealed himself in such a way that only the smallest fragment of Christendom should see the evidence so clearly as to be convinced,— such a scheme, it seems to me, is the most signal failure in human history; not only a signal failure, but a most ignominious and infamous failure. I say reverently and deliberately that if God were the author of any such scheme as this, instead of its being my duty to ask his forgiveness, I would stand before his throne, and tell him to his face that he ought to ask mine. This is my opinion of the scheme.

What is the parent of what is called modern infidelity? Is it not the growing intelligence of man? Is it not his developing conscience? Is it not the tenderness of his moral sense? Is it not the desire for proof? Is it not the revolt from immorality, at barbarism, at those things which the heart of man will no longer endure? It is the best things in the modern world that have created modern doubt; and the scheme of Orthodoxy is going down before the advancing conscience and advancing intelligence of the race.

Just one word concerning the one kind of Orthodoxy that is desirable as "the true doctrine." How do we know that any doctrine is true? Only through the experience and verification of man. Orthodoxy, then, will take care of itself. If a thing is true, it can be proved every day to be true. If it is not true, nobody has a right to say that it shall not be studied any longer. It is a question open for investigation.

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It is for the interest of man that every question that is not settled by verification shall be considered an open question until enough light has come, so that it can be settled. Orthodoxy, then, in the true sense of the word, can only be made up of the ascertained truth, the verifiable truth, of the world.

And now, O Father, our God and our King, who art the source of truth and its revealer to the growing thought and life of the world, we ask thee that we may bow down before thy revelations as fast as they are made, and that we may keep our hearts and thoughts open for the incoming of fresh truth, and may earnestly seek to know thy will and do those things which shall build up thy kingdom in the hearts of our fellow-men. *Amen.*

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BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. JANUARY 5, 1882. No. 14.

LOT'S WIFE:

A SERMON OF THE OLD YEAR.

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THE TEXT AND THE CANON.*

A LADY present in my audience last Sunday morning (I hope she was not one of my regular hearers, because I should be sorry to be so misunderstood and misinterpreted by one hearing me constantly) was overheard to remark that she did not see any use in Mr. Savage's attacking the Bible, a book that had done so much good in the world, whatever the truth about it might be. This may represent the attitude of more than one; and, for this reason, I wish to make one or two remarks concerning it.

In the first place, I am only telling the simple truth about the Bible; and it seems to me a most damaging admission for any one to make concerning a man, an institution, or a book, that telling the truth about him or it is attacking it. In the next place, we need to draw a very clear-cut line, or distinction, between the Bible and the theories that have been held or taught concerning it. If you will notice, I think you will bear me witness that I have never attacked the Bible; and it is not my purpose to do so in this course of sermons. I only attack what I regard as certain false, unfounded, vicious theories involved in the claims put forth on its behalf, which it has never put forth, and has never attempted to sustain. In the third place, we need to remember that theories and beliefs concerning God, concerning Bibles, concerning institutions of one kind or another, may have been really helpful to man in some stage of his progress; and yet these same beliefs and theories may afterward come to be hindrances that stand in the way of his further advance. So much by way of comment on this type of criticism.

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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Last Sunday morning, I treated of the English Bible, its contents, its divisions, natural and artificial, and the theories that have been held in the past, and are now currently held concerning it. In so doing, I took note of the well-known fact that this English Bible of ours is a translation from an earlier literature; and I called your attention to this somewhat important point, that, even though the originals of the Old and New Testaments may have been infallible and inspired, we cannot claim that we have now a book which is thus infallible and inspired, unless we know that the translators were divinely assisted in their work; and this no man that I ever heard of has ever put forth as a sober claim. But, even though we knew that the Old and New Testament manuscripts were originally infallible and inspired, we should not be sure that those copies that the translators used possessed these characteristics, unless we could be certain that we have in our present copies just those books, and no more, that were in the first place rendered infallible, and unless we could be perfectly sure that they had come down to us through the ages unchanged in every essential feature. But, again, though we knew that the manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments had never been changed, though we could be sure that the translators had a copy from which they never varied by a phrase or a sentence or a word or a letter, we should not then be certain that the book was infallible and inspired. We should need to go back and find out where this original came from, and what credentials it brought with it when it came. That is further back than we shall be able to go this morning, and I shall confine myself to considering the text and the canon.

As we go one step back of our English Bible, what do we find? Do we find some one copy containing just the books of our present Bible, no more, no less? Do we find that this Bible has been transmitted from generation to generation without any changes or any mistakes? Instead of that, we find the truth to be almost as far the other way as you can conceive or imagine. As there are some special

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points that I wish to bring before you concerning the manuscripts of the Old Testament, I shall treat first of those of the New.

We have in the world a collection, not in any one place, but in all, of somewhere in the neighborhood of seventeen hundred New Testament manuscripts. Sometimes a manuscript is complete, containing all the books, sometimes containing certain books not at present admitted. In other cases, the manuscript covers only a fragment or one book or even a part of a book. Are these all alike? Does there seem to have been any supernatural supervision exercised in making these copies, to keep out any error or mistake? Does there seem to have been even ordinary human care exercised to prevent the intrusion of any errors? You can judge for yourself, when I tell you that, within the range of these seventeen hundred manuscripts, there are somewhere in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty thousand various readings. It is only just to say, of course, that the larger part of these variations are minute, not touching matters of great importance, sometimes only a difference in the spelling of a word, sometimes a difference in the word itself, sometimes a difference in a phrase; but some of them are important enough to extend to even whole paragraphs and parts of chapters, so that many of these variations are very important indeed.

Prof. George P. Fisher, of Yale Theological Seminary, one of the leading orthodox scholars, in an article published last summer in the *North American Review*, touching this matter of the various readings in the manuscripts, has sought to avoid the force of this very important point by saying that these manuscripts are probably nearly, if not quite, as accurate as those we have of Plato, of Aristotle, or of the Commentaries of Cæsar; that we do not feel any special doubt as to the teachings of Plato or Aristotle or Cæsar on account of the variations in manuscripts, and we ought not any more to feel anxiety or trouble about the New Testament variations. But there is a very marked distinction between

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the two cases, and one that an acute scholar like Prof. Fisher certainly ought not to have overlooked. No one claims that your life and mine for this world, much less our eternal destiny for heaven or hell in the next world, depends on the accuracy of a reading in Plato or Aristotle or Cæsar's Commentaries. If some great Church should turn one of these books into its Bible, and make human destiny hinge on the accuracy of the phrases of Plato or Aristotle, you would see then that the world would rouse and wake up in its interest as to whether we could be certain that these readings had come down uncorrupted from the past. There is no justice then in making any such comparison as this. The point we wish to know is whether we can be so certain as to the phrases, the wording, the literal teaching of this book, called the New Testament, that any body of men has a right to build a world-wide doctrine, and make the eternal peace or the misery of men depend on the reading of a text.

It is thus a question of very great importance for us to find out whether a book, on whose behalf such extraordinary claims are made, has come down to us accurately as it was written by its authors. I have said, however, that there are some one hundred and fifty thousand different readings in its manuscripts. How can we account for them? Under what influences have they come to exist? Under the most natural ones in the world. If we consider the New Testament as simply a human production, it is not strange that we should have these different readings, changes of texts, misunderstandings, misinterpretations. Every scholar knows that, concerning Shakspere for example, there are thousands and thousands of different readings, over which the critics speculate and study. But it does not arouse any general interest in the world, because it is of no practical importance to man whether Shakspere used this particular word in this particular place or that. No question of human destiny hinges on it. It is merely a question of literary curiosity.

These changes then have come about in the most natural

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way. In the first place, through the blunders of copyists. You are aware that printing is quite a modern invention; and that these manuscripts were written by hand, by the monks and students of the Middle Ages, and in the early ages of Christianity. If you have had a letter copied by the hands of a clerk, or if you have ever attempted to do any copying yourself, you know how easy it is to leave out or misspell a word or to substitute a wrong one or to make any one of a dozen common errors in copying a piece of work. Here is the source of a great many of them. Another rises from the fact that it was quite a common thing for the various makers of manuscripts to write in the margin of the book, or at the foot of the page, various little notes and comments; to suggest one word for another where they thought some previous copyist might have made a mistake. When a new copy was to be made, the man who was engaged in doing it would wonder a great many times whether these notes in the margin ought to be a part of the text, something that the previous copyist had left out; and, thinking they ought, he would incorporate them into the text itself. A great many changes, doubtless, came about in this way. If you remember that these Greek manuscripts generally were not divided into verses and paragraphs, but that they were written solid, you will see how easy it was for errors of one kind or another to spring up in this way. If, for example, I should send you a manuscript to-day without any division of paragraphs, sentences, or even of words, as some are written, all the letters about the same distance apart, and the whole page solid, the chances would be a hundred to one against your making me an accurate copy, putting in the punctuation where I intended it to be, dividing the sentences into words as I had them in my mind, and so giving an accurate transcript of the whole.

There is another source of error still that has sprung out of the doctrinal bias of the copyist himself. Deliberate liberties were taken a great many times by the copyist, in improving the text, as he supposed, leaving out a word that he

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did not like, or inserting one that he did. As in that great warfare that waged in the early Church between the Arians and Athanasians, between those who believed in the new doctrine of the Trinity and between those who fought against it, how natural it would be for a copyist to change a phrase this way or that, either on one side or the other, softening it down a little, so that it would not bear so emphatically against the doctrine which he really believed to be true! A great many times these men might honestly make these changes, feeling so sure that they had the right interpretation that only good could come from their amending the text a little, so that it should be impossible for the careless reader to misunderstand it.

Again, we must remember that the standard of literary ethics then was very different from the modern standard. To-day, we call a man a plagiarist, we convict him of literary theft, and he would be publicly disgraced, were he capable of writing books in such a way as these early workers were accustomed, as a common thing, to do. For example, it was a very common thing, during the first four or five hundred years before Christ and three or four hundred years after,—yes, seven or eight hundred years after,—it was quite a common thing for them to take the work of earlier writers in composing a book of their own, to borrow here and there such material from those books as they cared to use, and to incorporate it bodily into their own work, adding and changing here and there as they pleased, patching and piecing in such a way that only a critic could detect the way in which it had been done. Work of this sort can be traced in the manufacture of some of the manuscripts both of the Old Testament and the New.

Not only that, but it was a very common thing for writers at this time to do another thing which our standard of literary honesty would most severely condemn; and that is to put into the mouth of the speaker not the words which he really used, but such words, even extending sometimes to long speeches, as they supposed he would have used, or

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might properly have used, on such and such an occasion. Let me indicate to you how recently work of this kind has been done. In some of our modern school-books there are speeches or orations, supposed to have been delivered in Parliament by celebrated orators, which everybody knows were never delivered at all. There were no reporters at the time the speeches were made. The way in which the speeches were prepared was for some good writer, who knew that such a speech had been made at such a time, to write out what *might* have been said on that occasion by that speaker; and it passes in the modern world as the real speech. Sometimes, a thing of that sort is done by a smart reporter now. I was told not a great while ago by a prominent newspaper man at the head of a leading paper that he had sometimes been obliged to report the speeches of politicians, when he could not get near enough to hear more than now and then a word. Yet he must produce a speech. So he caught at this and that, as best he could; and, knowing the general sentiment of the speaker, he would write out as nearly as possible what he might be presumed to say. And, once, he did his work so well that he received a personal letter with the thanks of the speaker. He probably wrote out as good a speech as the speaker made, even if it was not just the one that he did make.

To go back to more ancient times, you are accustomed to find facts like these in the works of Thucydides, Xenophon, and Plato. Thucydides and Xenophon put into the mouths of military leaders speeches that they made to the soldiers on the eve of such and such a battle. But every one knows perfectly well that the writers are only putting into the mouths of their heroes the speeches which they might have made, or which would have been fitting to make, not the actual words that they used. If you take up the Dialogues of Plato, you find long utterances of Socrates; but Plato does not claim to make a verbal report of Socrates' words. He represents the general position of Socrates on these subjects; and he puts into his mouth

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words which are not the words of Socrates at all, but which are the words of Plato. This is very well, if it is fully understood. But, when we know that this may have been done in the case of Jesus, and that, in all probability, it was done by the writer of the Gospel of John, when he puts long prayers and speeches into the mouth of Jesus, which are entirely unlike that which the other three gospel writers give; when we are taught to believe that our eternal destiny hinges on the accuracy of these reports, it becomes important that we should know the character of the literary ethics which underlie this work, to know how they are produced, and how much weight and authority they carry with them.

Not only this, but, to go a step farther, not only did they incorporate the works of other writers, and put into the mouths of speakers and hearers that which they did not say, but that which they might have said; but they went to the extent of creating and producing whole books under the influence of a doctrinal bias, and for the purpose of carrying this or that belief through the public mind, and making it dominant in the religious circles of their time, which were outright forgeries. We should call them forgeries to-day, although it is a serious question whether we ought to hold the writers guilty, as we should in the nineteenth century. Such writing was not looked upon then as it is now. If a man felt that he was serving a good purpose, that he was helping on right thought, he considered himself justified in doing this kind of work. There are books extant to-day that came very near being incorporated into the Bible; and it is quite possible that such books were incorporated, books which were written two or three hundred years perhaps after the time of their supposed author, and were published with the names of some old saint or hero attached to them, that they might gain currency and authority in the great religious discussions of the time. We must remember these things, when we recall the question as to the accuracy and authenticity of the manuscripts that have come to be part of our modern Bible.

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Let me pass now to the manuscripts of the Old Testament. I wish to say of them in general that all these things which I have said concerning the New Testament will hold equally with them, so that I need not repeat them. I only wish to call your attention to one or two particular facts which bear upon the question of their accuracy. You are aware, perhaps, that the Hebrew language, as originally written, was made up entirely of consonants; that is, the Hebrew word as written or printed has no vowels at all. It was quite commonly the case that precisely the same word as it appeared on the written manuscript or printed page would have this meaning or that, according to the vowels which were understood to go along with the consonants thus written or printed. To give you a very commonplace example, suppose that English were printed without any vowels, and you should find the two consonants, b, n, you would see that it might mean bane, bone, bean, or been, or half a dozen other things, according to the vowels which should be combined with these two consonants to complete the word.

There are cases in the Bible where precisely this kind of liability to error occurs. As a practical illustration, Prof. Robertson Smith tells us that, in one passage, Jacob is represented as uttering his dying prophecies and farewell words to his sons while leaning upon his bed. Another passage, that refers to the same scene, says that he did it leaning upon his staff. This is easy of explanation, when we know that the two words in Hebrew for bed and staff are precisely alike in their consonants, and may be made to mean one or the other according to the vowels added. Of course, you can see what a huge field for misconception and error would come in here. It is long since the time of Christ, somewhere between the sixth and ninth centuries, that the system of vowel points was generally adopted, so that the reading of the Hebrew text was settled beyond controversy.

Now, then, without spending more time on the actual or possible sources of error in the manuscripts, let me say a

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few words in regard to the formation of the canon. As I have often said, if we were sure that we had an accurate copy of the original text, we should even then need to be sure that we had just those books which ought to be included in this collection that we call the Bible; and we should also need to know when this collection was settled, and under what influences. It is a very common opinion that the Old Testament canon was settled at least by the time of Christ, yet this is far from having been the case. About the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the time of the return from the Jewish captivity, the Pentateuch was about as it stands to-day. But long after that time, away down to the time of Christ, and for nearly a hundred years after that, the canon of the Old Testament remained open; and it was still a question which books should be included, and which shut out.

Under what influences was the canon settled at last? Was there any criticism, any special scholarship brought to bear upon it? None whatever. We can have no sort of intellectual respect for the decisive influences which at last fixed for all time the canon of the Old Testament scriptures. There came to be an exaggerated, superstitious reverence for the Old Testament in the Jewish mind; and it was carried so far that they believed there was some wondrous, supernatural, almost magical significance that might be discovered in every word and phrase and letter. It became a matter of the utmost importance to them, holding this belief, that they should be able to know what words and letters really were to be considered part of the Old Testament scriptures; and so there was an arbitrary selection made by the rabbins, who determined what particular text should be regarded as the true scripture. After this there was a persistent attempt made, and it was very successful, to suppress every other copy, and all variations from this, which they had determined should be the accepted reading. It was even taught that it was a dangerous, a fatal sin to read or have to do with any other copies. It therefore became a part of the Jews' religion to accept a certain text and no other; and

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so slavish was the fear induced in connection with this that the copyist of the Old Testament books from that time copied everything, even to the erasures and blots on the page, not daring to depart by a hair's breadth from anything which he found in the manuscript.

The Jewish canon, then, was settled under the influence of the rabbins toward the last part of the first century. The question whether Esther, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon; or Ecclesiasticus, the Maccabees, and others which now constitute part of the Apocrypha, should be included or not, was suddenly stopped by the destruction of the temple, which put an end to the growth of the Old Testament.

Thus, without any trace of superhuman guidance, was the question of the Old Testament finally settled. And, in my opinion, some of the books which were left out are more worthy to be there than some admitted; and I believe that they would have been admitted, had it not been for the sudden and violent ending of the Jewish nationality. Everything old was looked at through the haze and glamour of supernaturalism. Everything was idealized; and everything modern, as it is to-day with us, was regarded as common, and not having about it any of those supernatural qualities.

Now as to the settlement of the New Testament canon. A large number of books which have not come down to the modern world formerly existed, and stood their chances of becoming Christian scriptures in the early centuries of the Church. There was a very large number of gospels, a great many epistles, and numerous apocalypses, or revelations. Under what kind of influences and at what time was it settled what should be received as Scripture, and what not? For the first hundred or two years, when the Old Testament was regarded as sacred scripture and treated and spoken of as such, there was no such feeling for any written books of the New Testament, because it was the universal belief of the whole body of the Church that Jesus, after a year or two at the most, was to return again from the skies, and establish the visible kingdom of God upon earth. In the

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face of an expectation like that, what was the use of written books? It was only after this dream had faded away that the Gospels were composed. The Epistles of Paul were written before, to meet important cases of necessity and to answer questions arising at the time; but Paul had probably no idea that there would ever be any controversy as to whether his doctrines were the absolute truth or not. A large number of the books were written after this dream had faded away, and they felt the necessity of having some present guidance. And as it seemed a long time since Jesus had disappeared in the heavens, since the apostles had become memories and ideals,— as it became a wonder for some old man to be able to say that he had seen one of the apostles, or that he had seen somebody who had seen one of them,— they began to venerate and reverence that old time; and, as the links which connected them with it more closely than anything else, they began to reverence the books and writings that tradition asserted had come down from this distant past, and which bore in themselves the imprint of the personality and authenticity of those men that had actually seen the Lord and claimed to know just what he said. Under these influences, then, the old Scriptures — old at that time — came to take on an air of authority, to be invested with popular reverence, to be looked on as something closely linked with Him who had come out of the heavens and had disappeared into them, and to have about them a touch of the divine.

But who settled what books should come in, and which should go out? You will be a little astonished when I say to you that the question never has been settled, and is not settled yet. It was settled by the common consent of the early Church that the four Gospels should be recognized as a part of the New Testament Scriptures; but there has been controversy from that day to this concerning such books as Revelation, as the second and third Epistles of John, the second of Peter, the Epistle of James, and concerning other parts of the New Testament.

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Let me give you a hint as to the kind of influences which came in to determine and settle the question at last. As an illustration, suppose I take the Apocalypse or Revelation of John, which was probably one of the earliest of the New Testament writings. This teaches the immediate or the speedy coming of Christ in the heavens. While that belief was prevalent in the churches, that book was very popular. It was read and accepted everywhere. But when the people waited, and Jesus did not come, and the dream faded away, the book itself very naturally fell into disrepute. They came to believe that the author had been mistaken, or that he had not been inspired. Again, there was a fluctuation and a return of feeling in its favor, as this failure of the prophecies became forgotten. They took it up again, and began to read it with a new interpretation, idealizing it, putting a new meaning in its gorgeous, figurative language, and so getting out of it spiritual edification. They said it was not intended to be understood as literal truth connected with political upheavals and disturbances of that age. Under this new tide of feeling, the book came back to favor. Take again the influence brought to bear on the Epistle of James. James was supposed to have represented the old First Church in Jerusalem, and was of great authority in the early Church. He teaches, however, in this Epistle, salvation by works; and you know it has always been a popular Epistle among Unitarians. Paul teaches just as vigorously salvation by faith alone, and we can trace the controversy in the early Church here. Those who believed in Paul did not like the Epistle of James, and those who believed in James opposed the Epistles of Paul. There are traces in the New Testament of Paul's Epistles being treated with the most keen criticism and almost abuse. Luther said of James it was an epistle of straw, because it went against his prime doctrine of salvation by faith. Luther would not have it in the Bible. He proposed also to leave out the Revelation, saying it was not worth anything, and should not be there.

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I speak of this to show how freely this New Testament has been handled. Until the days of the Reformation, no such universal, superstitious feelings have been held as are prevalent in orthodox circles to-day. The Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, a Catholic council, settled finally for Catholicism the canon of the Bible; and this included not only the Old and the New Testaments as we have them, but the Apocrypha. There has never been any œcumenical council of Protestants, and so there has never been any Protestant settlement of the canon of the New Testament.

What, then, are the results at which we arrive? Is it not quite clear that, even if there ever has been an infallible revelation from God in the form of a book, we have in our hands no means for adequately determining the limits of that revelation? I certainly know of no way of deciding whether Revelation and the Epistle of James should be parts of any such book. Even if I knew that God had given an infallible revelation in the form of a book, I should not know what books they were; and I have no means of knowing. If we choose to shut our eyes, and take the authority of an utterly unfounded and unauthentic tradition, we can settle the question in that way. We can settle any question by shutting our eyes. But, if we choose to keep our eyes open, and search for a reason that is satisfactory to an unbiassed mind, such a reason is nowhere to be found.

So much for the canon. Come now to the text. Here again let me say, were I sure that God had given an infallible book revelation to the world, I should have no sort of reason for supposing that I had an accurate verbal copy in any English, Greek, or Hebrew manuscript now in existence. We have not a single manuscript of the New Testament which takes us as near to Jesus as we are to-day to Shakspere.

The oldest manuscript in existence is the Sinaitic.

The next is the Vatican, and the third is the Alexandrian. The Sinaitic is at St. Petersburg, the Vatican is at the Vatican, and the Alexandrian in the British Museum. The

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Sinaitic and the Vatican belong to the fourth century, the Alexandrian to the fifth. We have no manuscript that takes us back nearer to Jesus than the fourth century. Consider then, with all these influences to produce variations, what might have gone on through those three hundred years concerning which we are perfectly in the dark, and then tell me whether there is any reason which appeals to a rational man, which is capable of making him believe that we have any one single text of the New Testament so verbally accurate as to give us assurance that we have really the word of God as he first spoke it to man. Have we any such accurate knowledge of texts or words as justifies any Church in pointing out such a text, and saying that, on the strength of it, thousands and millions of people are to be sentenced to eternal doom? If I am to have the question raised concerning my eternal welfare, I would like to have it determined on the real word of God, if such a thing exists, and not on the possible blunder of a copyist.

Such, then, are the simple facts concerning the text and the canon of the Bible. As to more special facts concerning the authenticity and authorship of particular parts of the Bible, as to when and where and by whom they were written, what authority they possess, and the nature of that authority, these will be subjects for future research.

O God, who not only didst speak in the past, but whose voice has never been silent, who hast worked hitherto and dost work to-day, we come into thy presence, and ask thy loving guidance that is adequate to help us at this hour. May we feel that we are in the presence and under the leadership of a loving God, and that through thee we can find new light and new truth for every new subject that we take up in our eternal advance. Amen.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. JANUARY 26, 1883. No. 17.

GENERAL LIBRARY University of MICHIGAN

SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

3. THE PENTATEUCH.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE PENTATEUCH.*

THE Pentateuch means the five books, or, perhaps more strictly speaking, the fivefold book. The limits of it, as it stands in our Bible to-day, are not precisely what they always have been; for Joshua and Judges were to be found, in the old copies of the Hebrew Bible, along with the first five books, the whole making substantially one composition which went under the general designation of "the Law." I shall this morning, however, pay no attention to this fact, as it is not essential to my purpose. I shall consider only those books that go by the general name of the Pentateuch.

The traditional belief is that these books were written by Moses under immediate, divine inspiration, and of course written before the Jews had entered the land of Canaan. This is a significant fact to notice, because you will remember Moses, the reputed author, died on the other side of the Jordan, in the wilderness, at the close of the traditional forty years' wandering.

These five books contain, among other things, an account of the creation of the world, the creation of all things that live, breathe, and move upon the surface of the earth, including man. They contain an account of the origin and distribution of nations, the origin of language, or rather of languages, and the origin and nature of evil, popularly called the fall of man. Traditionally, they are infallible; and their teachings are set up as a standard for human belief, a standard to depart from which is, in the popular estimation, rebellion against God, outright and wicked infidelity; and, of course, if the traditional conceptions concerning these books be true, then it is rebellion against God to

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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doubt and deny, or teach anything else. You see then the practical importance of the question whether there is sufficient ground for believing that they are inspired and infallibly true.

Those who have held this theory have said that the world came into existence in such and such manner, and at such and such a time: therefore, it is sin for science to dare to speculate or to suggest any other time or method; and, on that theory, it *is* sin. It is daring to look the Almighty in the face, and question the truth of his word. They contain a certain account of the origin of man; and it is no wonder that those who hold this to be infallibly true should be horrified at the suggestions of a scientist like Darwin, because, if Darwin be true, God, according to their theory, is not true.

So concerning all the other questions of which these books treat. Because God has said, Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live, therefore hundreds and thousands of poor, excitable, nervous, weak-minded young women and old women have been tortured and put to death. Because God has made it the duty of a man to betray to the authorities any confession of doubt as to the truth of this book, therefore persecution has become a sacred duty; and the men who with bloody hands and flaming torch kindle the funeral pile may look up in the face of our Father in heaven, and expect his smile of approval. Because God has indorsed slavery, polygamy, massacre, wars of extermination, therefore all these things have had their advocates, even in the recent past, as eternally right.

It becomes then a matter of great practical importance in religion, as well as in science and morals, for us to know whether this book, as we hold it in our hands to-day, be the utterance of God or the traditions of men. And, because of the importance of this, I shall speak as plainly as I can concerning the Pentateuch.

There are three main questions that we need to raise and to answer: —

1. Who wrote it, and when?

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2. Without regard to who wrote it, is it true? Does it tell us the truth in science, history, and chronology?

3. Without any regard to whether it is true in its history, its chronology, its geology, its science, are we to accept its conceptions of God and man as final? Are they up to the standard of our nineteenth century religion and morals?

These are the three points that, as briefly as I can consistently with clearness, I want to ask you to consider with me.

You will notice that I coupled together, as though they were one, the two questions, when the Pentateuch was written and by whom. I do this because these two questions are inextricably woven together. If we find sufficient reason to make us believe that Moses wrote it, that settles the question when it was written. It was written during his lifetime. If, however, we find reason to suppose that it was composed at some later period, then that negatively settles the authorship: Moses at least did not write it. For this reason, the questions are practically one.

I want to treat this subject in such a plain and simple way that you will not think I am going into technical and critical details that are profound, abstract, and far away. I want to make it simple, practical, and concrete, so that every man as he opens the book may be his own critic.

Suppose I should take the complete edition of Shakspere's works, and, as I glanced through it, I should find passages right in the midst of "Macbeth" or "King Lear" or "King Richard III.," that referred to the telephone or steamboat? I should know most certainly that, whatever might be true concerning the rest of the plays, Shakspere never wrote those particular passages. I might, however, grant that it was nothing more than the interpolation of some other writer, while Shakspere was really the author of all the rest. But suppose that these passages are so woven into the text that we cannot tear them out without making a break, leaving a gap, which a master like Shakspere never would have left. Suppose, moreover, that I find woven into the very

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substance of some of the plays passages [that, by implication, and unconsciously on the part of the author, refer, let us say, to the corn laws of England or the agitation concerning free trade or the debate about the disestablishment of the Church? Suppose I find these matters taken for granted throughout the substance of the plays. What should I be compelled to believe? I should know that Shakspere never wrote them, though his name and autograph were on every page. Though I had a thousand affidavits certified to by the notaries of the time, still I never could be made to believe it, because it would be unspeakably absurd on the face of it.

Now let us look at these five books called the books of Moses, and see if we can trace anything parallel to what I have alluded to concerning Shakspere. According to the popular theory, the Pentateuch must have been written in the wilderness, before the children of Israel entered the land of Canaan at all. I shall not go into the subject deeply, but make general statements. What I give you are only specimens of what may be very much enlarged and prolonged.

As we look over the Pentateuch, we find statements like this: Such a thing occurred before there was any king over Israel. Do you see the significance of that? When was there a king over Israel? You have got to leap over the time of the conquest, come down by Joshua and the Judges, past the time covered by Samuel and his work, down at least to Saul, years and years after the time of Moses, because there was no king at all in Israel before that time. Yet here this writer says this took place before there was any king. Of course, then, he lived after the time when there was a king; and he is calling their attention to something that existed in the long distant past.

Again, we find one of the towns referred to and called by the name of Hebron; while we know from Jewish history that it was not called by that name until after the conquest of the land, and until after Caleb, one of the leaders of the people, had conquered this city and had named it Hebron

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after one of his sons. Suppose I should find some document purporting to be written by General Washington, and in that document he should refer to the city of Chicago. It would be precisely parallel to this.

Again, there are several passages which say, when such and such a thing occurred, the Canaanite was then in the land. The history teaches us that whole generations after the time of Moses had passed by before the Canaanites were all expelled. And of course this passage was written long after the expulsion. Would Captain Miles Standish be likely to write, Such a thing took place while the Indians were still in Massachusetts?

We find another passage like this,— a command to the people not to remove the ancient landmarks which have been set up as divisions between one man and his neighbor. Before any such command could have issued, the people must have been long in possession of the country. Individual possession must have been established by common consent, so that the dividing lines between their property could be spoken of as ancient. Sentiment had gathered around them with this sense of personal possession, and the public mind began to feel that it was wrong to disturb these marks that separated between the property of one man and that of another. These are superficial hints; but the finger-marks of a later time than that of Moses are all over the Pentateuch.

Let me now give you an idea of the composition of the Pentateuch, which makes the matter plainer still, if possible, because it is always open to any one to say that these surface indications may have been added by the hand of a later writer.

These five books, or six, if we include Joshua, bear traces that they are not one single document written by one single hand all the way through, but that they are a composite, representing the work of different writers and different periods of time. So clear and distinct is the work of those several writers that you can take the book apart into three pieces and have at least three separate books, each one quite com-

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plete and definite by itself. That is, you can have three separate stories as though written by three individual persons at three different periods of time.

Suppose that you should go to England and should find there, somewhere off in the country, a house, the oldest part of which was of Norman architecture, with a later part in the Elizabethan style and still another part indicating the work of the time of Queen Anne. Suppose there was a local tradition that the three parts were built by one architect who lived in the time of William the Conqueror, that he was inspired to foresee what the Elizabethan and Queen Anne styles would be, and that he therefore built the house with the three styles at one and the same time: would you credit this story? It is just as credible, reasonable, and easy to believe as it is to believe that the first six books of the Bible were written at the same time and by the same hand.

Let me show you how clearly this may be made out. You may be surprised to know how very modern this work is. The oldest part of it takes us down to about 621 B.C. We know from the history of the people that up to this time they had never known anything of the second and third parts of the Pentateuch; that they had not known anything about the peculiar legislation of the second and third parts; that they had shown no indication of obeying what is believed to be the divine legislation of those parts. About the year 621 B.C., we trace indications of a part of the Book of Deuteronomy. The oldest part of the Pentateuch goes by the name of the Book of the Covenants. About the time of Josiah, we find indications of what is now a part of Deuteronomy, quite distinct in its legislation, commanding the people to do things that, up to that time, they had never, apparently, heard about or done. Straightway, the people begin to obey this Book of Deuteronomy. They follow its directions, make it their highest standard, until, in the neighborhood of 450 B.C., when Ezra comes back from Babylon, at the return of the people from the captivity, he brings in his hand the book of the law of the Lord, which makes up

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the third part of this composite,—the Pentateuch. This is very markedly different from either of the two preceding parts. Until the time of Ezra, there is no proof of the people knowing anything about this part of the law, or being under any obligation to obey it. After that time, it is the standard and guide to the people, in the light of which all the preceding portions are interpreted. It becomes a master that they at least always claim to obey. Here, then, you see that we can take these three documents apart, and have three different stories and three different eras or epochs of legislation. This is settled beyond question in the mind of every intelligent and unbiassed critic. A man would prove a lack of scholarship or a lack of fairness by even claiming a doubt. By these surface indications, by the structure of the book, it is placed beyond question that Moses did not write the substance of the Pentateuch or any one of its books. The historical portions of the Old Testament running parallel with the Pentateuch make all this clear.

Are we, then, to refer nothing of the Pentateuch to Moses? Moses was the great traditional leader and law-giver of the people; and it was perfectly natural that, as time went on, they should refer everything back to him. A precisely analogous thing is going on right before our eyes. If you will only read the development of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, you will find it is very simple at the outset, growing more and more complex and composite with every passing century,—now announcing the doctrine of the immaculateness of the virgin, then exalting her to be mother of God, a deity, and taking her to heaven; then passing from the infallibility of the Church to the infallibility of the Pope himself,—all this grand development of doctrine going on, yet the Church claiming all the time that it has not changed its doctrine from the very beginning until now. The Church does not admit that it has added an article of belief to its faith in all these centuries: it is simply formulating now what the Church has always believed. That is the claim. So the Jews, as time went on, age after age, simply claimed that they were putting

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into new shape what was implied in the work that Moses did, and which was the teaching of the law of Moses. It is not peculiar then to ancient times. The process is going on around us to-day.

Did Moses then have nothing to do with it? That is a very hard question to answer. He may have been the author of the ten commandments,— not in the form in which they stand to-day, but in some briefer, simpler form,— because, originally, they were called "the ten words." He may have been the author, then, of the ten commandments. It is questionable whether we can attribute anything to him beyond that; and even so much is not quite certain.

Now let us pass to our second point. The Pentateuch we have found to be written not by any one person nor at any one time. It covers centuries, and comes down to at least 450 B.C. But no matter who wrote it, no matter when it was written, the most important thing for us to settle is whether it is true; whether it contains divine and infallible truth concerning God, concerning science, concerning matters of chronology and history. If we can find that it is true, then we can accept it; and it will become authority to us. It will be just as authoritative as the multiplication table; and it will make little difference who wrote it or when it was written. Here, again, I can only give you a few examples; because, to cover the whole ground, would require a whole book, and a large book at that.

Take the story of the origin of the world, the creation, as it is told in Genesis. Can we believe it to-day? It tells us that the world was created, and not only the world, but the sun, moon, and stars, the whole visible universe, six thousand years ago; that it was created in six natural days. I hope that none of you will be deceived in regard to this matter, or put off with any theory of indefinite epochs, such as have been used to explain the meaning of the word "day." The evening and the morning were the first day; and the evening and the morning were the second day. The author definitely tells us that he was talking about days bounded by

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the evening and the morning. Nothing can be clearer than that; and it is simply shuffling, it is dishonest, it is disingenuous, playing with words, for anybody to attempt to reconcile Genesis and science by considering these days as long periods of time. If you so consider them, then the seventh day, the Sabbath, is a long rest; and we should have to rest for six or ten or twenty thousand years. The writer then tells us that the world was created in six natural days, six thousand years ago, and that a certain definite order was followed in that creation. It says that light was created on the first day, and that the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day. According to this, we had light and evenings and mornings for three days before we had any sun, moon, or stars; and, if you are going to stretch those days to long periods of time, we must have had millions of years of mornings and evenings before we had sun, moon, or stars.

One other point. It tells us that the fishes and the birds were created on the same day, and that on the next day the animals, creeping things, reptiles, etc., were created. Now, it is a commonplace in scientific knowledge that the reptiles preceded the birds on earth. Here, again, is a grand mistake as to the order of the creative work. So much as to the indications of the difficulties here.

There is another and distinctive account of the creation, in Genesis, written by a different hand and at a different time. These two accounts contradict each other. In one, Adam and Eve were made on the same day. In the other, Adam was made a day or two, or several long epochs of time, if you so consider it, before Eve was made. All the animals were passed in review before Adam, to see if he could choose one which he could be reconciled to take as a companion. He does not find any to suit him; and the Lord, having decided that it was not good for Adam to be alone, makes Eve for a companion for him.

Passing from these, let us come to what the Bible has to tell us in regard to the origin of languages. You know it has become a great, distinct, wide-reaching science of itself, so

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that the discovery of any critical point in the development of a language is enough to make a man famous all over the world. But does Prof. Whitney or Max Müller or any of the great leading linguists of the world ever think of going back to the Bible to study the building of the Tower of Babel as having anything to do with the origin and diversity of languages? There is not an intelligent man in the world who would not smile at the suggestion; and yet, according to the popular ideas of Orthodoxy, these men should go to the plains of Shinar, and accept the fact that the Lord in heaven, becoming seriously alarmed lest these gigantic and presumptuous men might scale the holy heights to his throne, to prevent such a catastrophe, came down and looked over the country to see what they were doing, and decided to confound their language, so that they could not talk to each other, and thus puts an end to their enterprise. This is the account the Bible gives us of the origin of languages. It would be an insult to your intelligence to tell you that it is not true.

Take two or three figures concerning the Israelites and their departure from Egypt. It is said that seventy souls went down into Egypt. At the end of their sojourn there, they had increased so that there were three millions,—an utterly incredible story. There were as many Hebrews then as there were inhabitants in the thirteen colonies at the time of the Revolution. Out of these three millions, there were, it is said, six hundred thousand fighting men; that is, they had an army as big as the biggest one in modern Europe. Yet, when they started out, and Pharaoh gathered together his horses and chariots to pursue them, they whimpered and cried and were afraid, and called upon Moses as though they were going to be eaten up, instead of standing up to fight for their liberty and freedom with their army of six hundred thousand men. It is a little curious, too, since the Bible tells us that during the plagues in Egypt all the animals were destroyed, how Pharaoh had no trouble in gathering horses enough for a large army.

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Look at another thing. There were three millions of people in the land of Goshen, as many as there were in the whole of the United States at the time of the Revolutionary war. Yet word is got around to all these people so quickly that, *in one night*, they departed in such haste that they took their unleavened bread in their kneading-troughs, taking also their horses, cattle, fowls, all domestic animals, the old and the young, the sick and the well. The whole of the three millions of people were notified to gather up everything that they possessed, and to leave the country in one night. If anybody can believe that, he need have no further trouble with Munchausen or the *Arabian Nights*. It is utterly incredible and absurd. And when the three millions of people enter Palestine, though the whole country was not so large as the State of Massachusetts, they are warned to drive the inhabitants out slowly, lest the wild beasts of the land get the upper hands of them!

In the third place, look at a few of the implications as to the religious and moral character of the God of the Hebrews at this time, and see whether you can accept the religious and moral teaching of the Pentateuch as valid for us in the nineteenth century. I want, however, to bear distinct testimony to all that is good, grand, tender, and sublime in the Pentateuch; and there is a great deal, a great deal that the highest and most lovely civilization in any age need not be ashamed of or apologize for. Take the opening words of Genesis, for example,—though you must remember that they were written toward the time of Christ,—the sublimity of the picture of God saying, Let there be light, and there was light. This conception of God is grand. Again, we find grand conceptions of him as the thunderer, as he who dwells in the heavens, who rules over his people, guides them, loves them, cares for them. All these things I wish to admit in a word; but the question is not whether there is grand and noble teaching, but, Is *all* the teaching infallible and inspired? That is the question. With the answer to that question the popular theory must stand or fall.

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Let us look at a few indications. Let us take this same God, in the very first chapter of Genesis, in regard to his creative work. I refer to the puerility of that idea of having all the animals pass in review before Adam for him to see if there was any one suitable to be a companion for him. Take the creation of Eve as given to us,— the Almighty putting Adam to sleep, and performing a surgical operation, taking a bone out of his side and making a woman out of it: this picture of the infinite God of this universe coming down and working in that fashion; and, again, after the fall, represented as becoming butcher, tanner, and tailor, killing animals, and out of the skins making coats for Adam and Eve to wear! This is what it tells us. You must take these facts in their literalness and simplicity, and not refine them away with your spiritualizing methods and interpretations.

Take the God who makes this man and woman and puts them into the garden without the slightest particle of experience, without knowing they had an enemy in all the universe, and then making not only their own fate, but the fate of all the world depend on one ignorant act, he himself knowing that the serpent was coming, yet not a breath or hint of it given to them. Conceive the state of mind of a people who believed that the future of the whole human race could depend on whether they ate an apple or did not, who could believe and make Jehovah himself believe that the question of the immortality of these sinful people depended on whether they could taste another apple or not. For it tells us that God was afraid they would get hold of the tree of life and become deathless; and, lest such a thing should happen, lest they should eat of this tree and become immortal, he drove them out of the garden and put flaming swords and dragons at the gate. You must rid yourselves of the notion that the cherubim were angels. A cherub in the old Hebrew was a dragon as much as was the one that guarded the garden of the Hesperides. It was a dragon that was placed at the entrance to the garden of Eden to keep Adam and Eve from returning thither.

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I have referred to the story of Babel. I will not speak about the kind of God implied in the story of the flood. Let me speak rather of the character, the conception of the God who comes to Abraham in the form of man, with two angels for companions. He sits down in the tent-door of the Arab chieftain, while he hastens to bake cakes, to catch a calf and dress and roast it; and then the Almighty God of the universe is pictured as eating roast veal and cakes with Abraham. That is what it tells us. And, after he makes a certain promise concerning Sarah, he notices that Sarah is laughing at him behind his back, because she does not believe a word of what he is saying; and he rebukes her for her discourtesy. These are some of the pictures that are given of God in all their crudeness of barbaric conception.

Look at the exodus, and see what kind of a God deals with Pharaoh and with the children of Israel. He declares beforehand to Moses that he is going to harden Pharaoh's heart, so that, in spite of everything he shall do, he will not consent to their going. He takes upon himself the blame for the future conduct of Pharaoh, or at least the responsibility for it. He distinctly indorses lying at the very outset. He tells Moses to say that they want to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to God. He does not say anything about running away. He tells them to deceive Pharaoh, to get his consent on false pretences. And, for what Pharaoh does, he punishes the whole land of Egypt, — men, women, and children. Not only that; but he punishes with disease and death all the poor, innocent cattle throughout the whole realm,— punishes them for what he has made one man do.

Let us go on a little further. We find that this God, on more than one occasion, distinctly and definitely indorses lying to carry out a purpose. What else does he do? He distinctly indorses human sacrifice. It is implied all the way through. In accordance with this implication, human sacrifice lasted in Israel till within a few centuries of the time of Christ. The God of Moses distinctly commands

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human sacrifice. He says, if you have vowed to devote a man unto the Lord in sacrifice, you shall not in any wise suffer him to be redeemed, he shall surely be put to death.

Take another thing. When Achan sins, what does the Lord do? He commands Moses to go and separate not only this one man from the people, but his wives, his brothers, his sons-in-law, his daughters-in-law, the whole clan,— men, women, and children,— all the cattle and household goods and effects that he owned; and then the earth opens and swallows them up. He punishes with torture and death not only the man himself, but everybody related to him,— as though, if one of you here to-day should commit a larceny or a murder, your whole family — wife, friends, and relatives — should be tortured and put to death for it. That is the method in the Pentateuch.

I wonder if you have ever noticed this: that in this same Pentateuch there is a command that on a certain occasion a city should be captured, and that all the men and all the married women and little children should be put to death, as likewise all the cattle; but that the young, unmarried women should be saved alive, and distributed among the soldiers and the priesthood. What do you think of that kind of a god for the worship of the nineteenth century? Slavery, polygamy, wars of extermination, everything barbaric that you can name,— I cannot catalogue any more,— you will find indorsed somewhere within the limits of the Pentateuch; and, if that is the divine and infallible word of God for all time, then these crimes, these barbarisms that the world has repudiated with horror as belonging to uncivilized times, ought to be recognized as part of the ethical and religious code of Boston in the nineteenth century.

Is it necessary for us to assume a theory of inspiration to account for this book of the Pentateuch? The highest conceptions of God which are entertained there were entertained in Egypt before Moses was born. Its highest and noblest morals were also held and practised to some extent in Egypt long before Moses was born. Is it necessary to as-

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sume inspiration to account for these mistakes in science and chronology, to account for this conception of God and this code of morality which we have seen to be so barbaric and defective?

In closing, I wish to call your most sincere and earnest attention to two or three things: —

In the first place, I wish you to note that I have not been attacking the Pentateuch. I am simply telling you about it. I am directly and indirectly attacking a theory held concerning it, which the Pentateuch neither asserts, implies, nor indorses. And I wish to say, further, that, when we take a rational, natural view of the origin of this book, we find nothing there which need surprise us, nothing there which calls for apology. The views of the origin of the world, of the nature of God, of the origin of man and of evil, are similar to those which were entertained by other peoples in the same relative grade of civilization. They are simply the views concerning God, man, and the world, through which every people in its development naturally passes, but in which no people ought to stay. That is the point. When, then, we take this natural theory of the origin and growth of these books, we find what we should expect; and we are comforted by the consideration that we are compelled to believe that religion and morality are a part of the nature of things, and, as such, based on eternal foundations; that they grow as nations grow, that they take on the character of special grades of civilization, that they are lifted up as civilization is lifted up, that they are enlightened as men are enlightened, made broad and tender and humane as men are brought up to the ideal of their humanity.

But, on the other hand, consider the difficulties that harass us at every step, if we take the old and traditional theory of these books. We are compelled perpetually to disingenuous twisting and turning of texts, in order to bring it anywhere into harmony with the demonstrated facts of the modern world. We are compelled practically to be dishonest with ourselves in regard both to science and the

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inspiration of the Pentateuch. We are compelled to believe that certain moral characteristics which arose in the barbarism of the past world are the eternal right and wrong of God. We are compelled perpetually to apologize for God; to explain to men how it could be possible that he who is the loving, tender Father of men to-day was once the cruel, bloody, heartless, false persecutor and deceiver of men.

Is it not then something, not to mourn over, but to be grateful for, to get such a belief in the growth of religion and morality, such a conception of the origin and development of sacred books, as shall permit us to use our brains, to keep the tenderness of our hearts, and at the same time to be loyal to our highest thought of the living God?

Father, we ask for light! May it come to us through our reason, that thus there may be in and around us a growing revelation of the divine; that we may have an ideal of Thee which we can honor and worship and love, and which shall perpetually rebuke us for our sins and weaknesses, and inspire us to ever new and grander endeavor for the future.

Amen!

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SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. FEBRUARY 9, 1883. No. 19.

SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

4. THE PROPHETS.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE PROPHETS.*

LEST I should be misunderstood on what is quite an important point for a general understanding of the development of the Hebrew religion, I take this occasion to say that, if I had pursued the strict chronological order of development, I should have taken this subject first, and the Pentateuch afterward. That is, the work of the prophets preceded the law in the shape in which it appears in our Bible to-day. The period of prophecy, I may say, in a general way, stretches from the eleventh or twelfth century B.C. to the fifth century B.C. Parts of the Pentateuch appeared at various times during this period; but it was not brought into its present shape, as we have it now, until the greater part of the work of the prophets had been accomplished, somewhere within the fifth century; so that, chronologically speaking, instead of saying the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, we should say the Prophets, the Law, and the Writings. Please bear this in mind, so as not to misunderstand the real order of development, as I give you some indications of the crude and barbaric origin of prophecy among the Jews.

The traditional idea of prophecy, the one in which I myself grew up as a boy, and which I held even in the beginning of my own ministry, and that which, I believe, is widely prevalent in the public mind, is that the prophets were a distinct order of men, appearing only among the Hebrews, and leaving traces of themselves only in the religion of Israel and in the Old Testament; that they were

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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in a certain sense a homogeneous body of men; that though they might be like the different instruments in an orchestra, each playing his own special part, that yet, together, they made one music; that they had substantially the same ideas of right and wrong, and those the very highest, the divine and unchanging ideas of ethics; that they had substantially the same ideas concerning God, all agreeing in the highest, most refined, sublimated, and spiritual thoughts of God, such as are fitted to lead on and lift the thought of the world forever. Beyond this, it is a part of the popular idea that one of the main duties of the prophets was to foretell future events, things that were to occur fifty, a hundred, or a thousand years in the future, which, by no possibility, could be foreseen except by some one directly and supernaturally illuminated by the divine spirit itself; that, thus illuminated, they became a direct proof of the supernatural nature of religion, one of the foremost pillars to uphold the popular conception of the supernatural character of the Bible, and the religion it represents.

I remember when I used, as a theological student, to be considering the great matter of Christian evidence, that the miracles and the prophets were placed side by side, like the two great pillars that upheld the temple that Samson in his religious frenzy threw down. Miracles and the prophets were the two unimpeachable supernatural evidences of divine inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible.

The special thing that the prophets were able to see and foretell, as was supposed, was the coming Messianic kingdom. They were commissioned to outline in unmistakable terms the figure of Jesus as the coming Messianic King, and thus to foreshadow all the glory of his divine and eternal reign. This seems to me to be a fair representation of the traditional idea of the prophets and their work. I shall only treat it indirectly, as I go on with my subject.

Let me call your attention to three quite distinct and definite phases of the development of prophecy among the Jews. I do not mean to say that these three are clearly

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outlined, following one after another, without any very marked connection between them. I only say that, in the continuous line of development, from the seer or soothsayer up to Isaiah, there are marked phases that it is worth while to notice.

In the first place, as I open the Bible, I find sixteen books, four called the major prophets and twelve the minor, representing the work of those whose writings or sayings have been traditionally preserved for us. A part of these sixteen books were not spoken, not preached, not delivered at all, but were simply written. Some of them were undoubtedly spoken, and then written out afterward either by the prophet himself or by some one who heard him, who supposed himself to be correctly reporting what the prophet said.

As you look over any one of them,— Isaiah, for example, —you will find that a very small part of it even pretends to be given in the form of prediction, to foretelling anything that is about to take place in the immediate or in the far-distant future. Neither are we to understand that all of these books were written by the persons whose names stand at their heads in all cases, nor that any one of them was written through, just as it stands, by any one author. At least, it is safe to say that, in a large number of cases, they represent a variety of authorship. They are made up as one might make up the speeches of Burke or Sheridan, if he had only fragments of them, parts written here and there, collected without much regard to their quality, and without much regard to their chronology or place or time of delivery, the whole collected perhaps many years after they were spoken, and edited by some one who should put them in final shape for posterity. This is the general conception that you are to have of these written prophecies.

Now for the contents of some of them. Suppose we open Isaiah, and indicate briefly some specimens of the topics treated. In one chapter, he goes on to encourage the people when they are in distress and are downcast by giving them

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general promises of the divine favor, and by assuring them of deliverance after they shall have received the requisite amount of punishment which they have deserved, and which he declares to be for their good. Then, he rebukes the tyranny, the impurity, the idolatry, or some other sin, of the king or some of the great ones at court. Then, he will turn to animadvert very severely on the fashionable frivolities of the ladies of Jerusalem at that time, describing the tinkling ornaments, the wristlets and anklets and bells, and telling them they would certainly meet with divine judgment and retribution for this lightness and frivolity of life. Then, the prophet takes up some burden concerning the present condition of Egypt or Assyria, threatening divine judgment on them for their encroachment on the people of God, or some judgment on the king for entertaining the idea of alliance with these foreign powers. Then, idol worship in the high places, the mingling of the people in the lascivious worship of Ashera, the Syrian Venus, are reproved. In this way, the prophet is more a preacher of righteousness than one who foretells events that are to take place at some future time. In some few places there may be what may be called prophecies; but what they mean I shall consider later.

Now take a step back, and see another type of prophet. Take the prophet Elijah. He wrote nothing. None of his speeches, if he ever made any, have been recorded. There are only isolated words or sayings. He is not the man of writing, the man with a pen, the man of words. He is a man of deeds, the actor, the one who appears at some crisis of the nation's history, and casts into the scale of what he believes to be right and truth the tremendous weight of his supposed supernatural, divine influence. He stands up for what he believes to be the rights of the people, and attacks the tyranny and idolatry of the king. He appears like a meteor flashing across the startled sky of one of those old superstitious kings, and then disappears again into the night. Like John the Baptist, he dresses himself in sackcloth, eats whatever he can find in the wilderness, spends years at a

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time living in the desert places or concealed among the few people who believed in him, and at some crisis epoch of the people appears, suddenly startling the king and nobility out of their semi-secure state. He appears to Ahab, and announces that for three and one half years it shall not rain, and then disappears. At the end of that time, he suddenly reappears to Ahab, as he is far away from the capital, and tells him to hasten to the palace; for he hears the sound of rain. He then goes up into a mountain, and sees a little cloud no larger than a man's hand, which spreads over the sky. Then, in that wild, rapid, frenzied way of the times, he cries out, runs down to Ahab, and in front of his chariot till he reaches the royal city of Samaria. This is a different type of prophet from Ezekiel or Isaiah.

Go back, and note a third phase, earlier still than these. Here is Samuel, not worshipping in the temple, for there is no temple; having no fear about the high places; worshipping God under the image of a bull or golden calf, as it is called in some parts of the Bible; and engaged in the practice of what we should call to-day clairvoyance, soothsaying, or, except for the evil significance of it, witchcraft. He is the man to whom Saul goes to find out where something is that has been lost. We find, in connection with this sort of prophecy, there were what were called schools of the prophets,— gatherings of young men who lived in the same place, and who were susceptible to this same curious kind of influence which came upon them, and who, when they were under this influence, acted like madmen, stripped off their clothes, lay for a day and a night naked upon the ground, uttering meaningless cries and sounds, and were supposed, while in this condition, to be controlled, guided, by the indwelling spirit of the God who had taken possession of them.

I want now to show you what kind of influence this was, and how it was interpreted by the people.

If we go back to ancient Greece, we shall find they had one method of divination which was by the casting of dice.

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They had painted dice, and, after going through some religious ceremony, or praying to some particular god, they threw these dice, and then interpreted the will of the god according to the indications of the throw. As we read about that in the heathen writers, it strikes us as utterly irreligious, as promotive of anything but piety or spiritual worship. Yet do not be startled when I tell you that the eleven apostles, after the suicide of Judas, took precisely this method for getting at the divine will as to the appointment of the twelfth man to take the place of the betrayer. If you remember the story in the Book of Acts, it says that the apostles gathered together and picked out two men, either of whom they thought would be a fitting one to fill this important office. Then, they prayed to God and cast lots, or threw dice, as we should say. In this way, as they supposed, was indicated the will of God as to which one of the two should be the chosen.

There is another thing worth our notice in this connection in the New Testament. In the Book of Acts, it says that, at the time of the Pentecost, when the divine spirit came like a rushing mighty wind, and when the Holy Ghost like cloven tongues of fire appeared on the heads of the members of the infant church there gathered, the disciples spoke with tongues. Remember that the Book of Acts was written a great many years after Paul wrote his Epistles. Tradition had enlarged the original story until the writer really supposed, and tells us, that these persons spoke so that the different nationalities that were gathered there all understood them, each speaking in his own language.

Now go back a step, and see what Paul says about this same phenomenon. Paul tells us that there were a great many different gifts of the spirit among the young churches. Some understood the gift of prophecy, some had gifts of healing, some could lay their hands on others, and they would receive the spirit. Among these gifts was one called the gift of tongues. Those who read the New Testament superficially suppose this was the gift of speaking in other

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languages; and this is what the author of Acts had in mind. If you study the language of Paul carefully, you will find nothing of the kind. The man who has the gift of tongues thrills, quivers, sighs, rolls up his eyes, is in a rapt, "possessed" condition, and in this condition he pours out a stream of meaningless sounds: he babbles. This is what Paul means when he tells us about speaking with tongues. But he and the early Church supposed this was a divine utterance of the spirit of God who had taken possession of the persons, and that the sounds, meaningless to ordinary hearers, contained some divine message which required an inspired interpreter to tell the people what it was. Do not seek this gift of tongues, he says, because it does not edify, unless there is some one who can interpret. Do not bring discredit on the young Church by seeking to practise these gifts, unless there is some one present with the divine power of interpreting these meaningless cries, and of telling the people the message that ought to be conveyed. He distinguishes this from what he calls prophecy by saying he would rather prophesy, or speak five words that people could understand, than any number of words in a tongue. It is not an unknown tongue. The translators, supposing that was what he meant, put in the word "unknown." It is not in the original.

This same phenomenon reappeared in modern London under the preaching of the famous but eccentric Edward Irving. But that which was divine inspiration in the first century was repressed as an impropriety in the nineteenth.

Now come back to the Old Testament, and find some traces of the method by which the people believed they could come into possession of divine knowledge. It was very common for the people, when they wanted to find out any hidden thing, to go to the high priest and ask him to divine by *Urim* and *Thummim*. What were these? They were, it is thought, bright precious stones which were set in the high priest's breastplate. We do not know how they used them; but, in some way, these precious stones were supposed

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to have the magical power of divination. The high priest, as the result of some special ceremony or sacrifice, by the use of these stones, precisely as a modern fortune-teller by cards, was able to tell secrets, and answer the questions of those who came to him.

We do not know, as I said, the special method of using these stones; but, as a possible hint, I may say there are a great many stories of magical stones that were supposed, after a religious ceremony, to have the power of disclosing what was going on in distant places by a series of shadows passing across the face of the stone itself, so that the person who held the stone to his eye could see these moving pictures. Whether this was the way in which they divined the future by Urim and Thummim, I do not know.

There was another method of divination that was by the use of the *ephod*. This was a curious girdle of the priest, which again in some way, the actual report of which has not come down to us, was used in processes of divination. They also used the *teraphim*, small idols, in the same way. You will recollect that Rachel, when fleeing from her father, laid so much stress on these portable deities that she stole them from her father and hid them in the furniture of her camel and sat upon them, thinking thus she should be able to keep with herself the divine favor and magical protection that went along with the little images of the gods.

I speak of these things as common throughout the Old Testament. Let me give you one or two as illustrations, for it seems as though people read the Bible with their eyes shut, or else as though they considered these things as something entirely distinct from the practices of other nations and other religions.

Let us stand for a moment with Moses in the presence of Pharaoh, and see him holding his magical rod in his hand. Moses, of course, was looked on by Pharaoh as a soothsayer, a magician, a prophet like those he already knew, and any number of whom he had about him. When Moses flings down his rod, and it turns to a serpent, all the others

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throw theirs down, and they turn into serpents also. Moses possesses no power which is not common to the other magicians, except — and here is the indication of the interpretation given by a later belief to these old traditions — the God of Moses was a greater God than the God of Pharaoh. Moses did not doubt the existence of the gods of Egypt. There is no trace of that whatever. Until after the time of David, there was no doubt as to the reality of the existence of the gods of other peoples. Moloch and Dagon and Astarte were real gods. The only point was that Yahveh, the god of the people of Israel, was above all the others, a greater god than any of the rest. That was proved satisfactorily to Moses, when his serpent ate up all the other serpents. These magicians could turn their rods to serpents, but only his serpent could eat the others. This showed the supremacy of the God of Moses.

When a king went to war, it was not simply a war between two peoples and their kings, but it was a war between their gods also; for Dagon on one side and Yahveh on the other were supposed to fight just as much as the Philistine king and the king of Israel and their followers. Precisely the same is true in the Iliad. There the Greeks and Trojans were fighting on the plains, but the air was thick with the gods of Olympus urging on and inspiring the champions, guiding the dart of one, the spear of another, overthrowing the horses and chariots, so that, when the day was done, it was a question whether the conquest was achieved by the people or by the invisible gods and goddesses of the air. We find these ideas throughout ancient times, and they are as apparent all over the surface of the Old Testament as in the myths of the Greek and Roman mythologies.

Let me give you an illustration of the way the Greeks used to divine, and see how all this belongs to one stage of development. Had you gone to Dodona, in Greece, you would have found there one of the most famous of all the ancient oracles. Any one who came to Dodona could ask a question as to the future, or about any hidden thing, and get

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an answer from the priest in charge. How did the priest get his information? He listened to the rustling of the wind in the supposed sacred Dodona oaks and beeches; and he claimed to have the divine power of interpreting the sounds made by this rustling, and thus getting the divine message. Suppose you were to go to another famous oracle of the Greeks, perhaps the one best known, the oracle of Delphi. What would you have found there? A temple built over a chasm, or cave, from which issued a vapor; and this vapor either actually had, or was supposed to have, the power of setting nervous organizations, such as were adapted to be priests at Delphi, into a mesmeric or convulsive condition. Whatever was true under its influence, it was only such an influence as you could produce by giving certain gases now. The person becomes unconscious; and before he is entirely gone, as we say, he gives utterance to certain words or incoherent sounds and cries. These words were supposed to be the utterance of the gods who had taken possession of them, and these were the answers that were given to those who came to inquire at their shrine.

This excited condition was sometimes induced by the aid of instruments of music, as in the case of Samuel. The school of prophets was preceded by the harp, the tabret, and pipe. We find this the case all over the world among barbaric people. Certain persons who are very susceptible are wrought on by these sounds until they are supposed to be in a religious frenzy and able to give divine messages to the people. It is also produced by drugs of certain kinds. In India, the *Soma*, a drink capable of producing intoxication, was formerly worshipped as a god, and the person under its influence was supposed to be delivering a divine message.

Many of these things, though haloed by the glamour of distance and the superstitious reverence that gathers about the past, were precisely analogous to the results of religious frenzy as exhibited in the excitement of modern revivals. He who — as I have — has attended a negro revival meeting, or who has attended a Methodist church on the frontier, and

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has seen a man or woman rolling on the floor, possessed by "the power," knows what ignorance is ready to call divine.

Again, one of the commonest beliefs common all through the Bible, in the New Testament as well as the Old, was in the divine meaning of dreams. Either the person himself, or some other person for him, could interpret these dreams. Joseph had the power of dreaming and of interpreting his own dreams. Pharaoh had wonderful dreams, but he had to call Joseph in to give him the meaning. The people had no doubt that these dreams brought a meaning from the other world, and that thus they came into the possession of divine secrets.

Let me now give you the underlying idea, the common belief of barbaric men out of which all these beliefs have sprung. You are aware, perhaps, that the soul and body have been regarded in almost all ages, from earliest times certainly, as quite separable and distinct from each other, not only as capable of being separated at death, but temporarily, so that the spirit could go out of a man, and he could lie like a vacant house with no occupant, till it came back, or, during his absence, another spirit could come in, and take possession. To take possession of a man, then, merely meant that some other spirit had come into his body, and made him do what it would, in spite of the man's individuality. We have a reminiscence of this in our common language. We say of a person that has fainted, "He has gone." That used to mean the soul had gone, had left the body. Even now, when a person is getting over a fainting fit, we say he is "coming to,"—his soul is coming back to the body. We carry this survival of the once universal idea into the language in this way. It was believed in all sincerity in the Old Testament and New; it was believed in Homer; it was believed all over the world, in a certain stage of human culture, that the soul could go away and come back, or that another soul could take possession. It was believed—Cicero teaches it, Philo teaches it, all of them teach it—that, when the soul goes off

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in a dream, the scenes which pass through the person's mind, the conversations it engages in, are just as real as any event of waking life. They had no idea of the philosophy of dreaming; and, if a man fell asleep, and during that sleep had a talk with a neighbor, and told when he waked up that he had seen such an one, and had had such a conversation with him, they believed that it had really happened. It is perfectly natural then that out of this should spring the idea of possession by another spirit. For example, a person is seized with a fit of epilepsy and falls into a swoon and goes through certain motions, or, as in delirium, carries on conversation with others. When he comes out of it, he is told that he said so and so, or did such things; and he very frankly replies, "No, I did not say it, I did not do it." He has no memory, no consciousness of it. It was the most natural thing that they should have thought that such a person had been taken possession of by another will, by a disembodied spirit, and, while in this condition, the spirit had made him do these things, and had thus talked through him.

It takes only one more step to say that in this way we can get divine revelations; and people who were susceptible to these influences, people who were easily wrought upon, nervous persons, who had a tendency toward any of these peculiar psychological phases of development, who were inclined to hysterics and epilepsy,— these, as we know, were the ones who were sought out to serve as priests and mediums between this world and the next.

You are aware perhaps that among barbaric peoples, among the North American Indians, among the Arabs still, among all people in that stage of culture, that an insane man is looked on as inspired, and he is treated with the utmost tenderness and care. His words are watched as though instinct with divine meaning, or, if not inspired by a good being, they think possessed by a bad being. All through the New Testament, down through almost the entire history of the Catholic Church, this belief in demoniacal possession

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is very apparent; and the business of the exorcist, or one capable of driving the spirit out, was one of the most important functions exercised by the priesthood.

Here, then, we have the root of all the traditional beliefs concerning divine possession, prophecy, revelation, through another.

These prophets of the Old Testament back in the time of Samuel, Baalam, past Elijah till we come to Isaiah, and the grandest development of prophetic life among the Jews, all believed that they were taken possession of by the spirit, and that they were speaking not their own words, but the words of this indwelling power, which for the time being had subdued their own aptitudes and faculties, and simply used them for this purpose.

I do not wish you to understand that, because I have given you thus the root of prophecy, I have not the highest and noblest feeling of respect toward the grandest fruits and noblest outcome of it in Hebrew history. It is nothing against astronomy that it had its beginning in astrology. It is nothing against chemistry that it had its beginning in alchemy. It is nothing against any of the grand scientific developments of the world that all human culture, if traced down, finds its roots in crudeness, in ignorance, in senseless speculations. The function of prophecy among the Hebrews was one of the grandest, in its higher developments, that has ever been seen in the history of any religion on the face of the earth. The prophet was the tribune of the people, standing between the tyrant and the wronged, lifting up his voice for the noblest ethics and the grandest religious ideas of his time. It is indeed true that the earlier prophets did not teach the morality which we should expect of the leading teachers of to-day, but they taught the highest of their age. It is true that many of the earlier prophets were not monotheists. They believed in a great many gods. They worshipped images of Yahveh in the high places. Elisha and Elijah were not monotheists. They lived in the northern kingdom, after it was separated from

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Judah. The first thing the leader of the northern kingdom did was to set up two golden oxen, images of Yahveh,— for God was worshipped at this time under the images of these golden calves,— as other people worshipped their gods under some other form. These great laws against idolatry were developed a long time after David and Elijah and Elisha. It was a later outcome of the religious development of the people. They worshipped Yahveh under these images. They were not scandalized at idol worship, and that the symbols of the worship of some other god stood right alongside their own: only they felt that Yahveh was their special God, and they recognized him as supreme.

We look back at these prophets, and, thrown into shadow by their sides or leading up to them, we see the indistinct outline of other prophets who have been forgotten. They, in their time, were believed in as much as Elijah or Elisha. As time goes by, it sifts and gleans the gold from the sand; and as we look back, down the ages, we fix our minds on Elisha, Elijah, Samuel, Isaiah, Micah, Amos, those great men. Why? Not because they were believed in chiefly by the people of their time, but because they really were the men who stood for the highest and grandest things of their age; and the others were pronounced, after the age had gone by, to be false prophets, because it had been proved by experience that the things they stood for and taught were not the highest truth of the time. The process of selection was as natural as that by which we take out Abraham Lincoln and Gov. Andrew as the ones that best represented the ideas that experience shows were the highest and truest of their time, those to which victory was given, and which have been made the dominant ones of the age.

These people, then, did a grand service for Israel. It is these prophets that we have to thank for the highest and finest outflowering of the religious life of the people; and the idea which they represented was higher than any religious development that the world had then seen. When Jesus said God is to be worshipped, not in this particular place or

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that, but in spirit and in truth, because he is spirit, he was only echoing the grandest sayings of Micah and Isaiah and Ezekiel. They taught this grand spiritual religion. They stand as representatives and prophets of monotheism to all coming time. We shall not be able to get any higher, sweeter notions of religion than some which they taught. All we can do is to take the germ, develop and apply it broadly over human society. When Micah says, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" he has given us as fine a definition as the world has yet attained. We cannot improve the definition: all we can do is to live it out.

There is one other point as important as any of which I have treated, and that is the question whether the prophets did ever foretell things that were to come to pass in the far distant future in such a way as to indicate that they had anything in the way of supernatural knowledge. I answer in one word, No. There is no proof whatever that the prophets had any supernatural knowledge of the future in any degree beyond that of any shrewd observer of the forces at work in his time, who has learned to understand that every condition is a cause that must be followed by its natural effect. Let me take up two or three typical examples, that I may show you how true this is. It is commonly said that Jeremiah prophesied that the Jews would go into captivity for seventy years, and then return. He does make that prophecy, but it was not fulfilled. It is common to say that it was; but they reach the fulfilment by doctoring the facts, by fixing an arbitrary time for the beginning and an arbitrary time for the ending of the period. In that way, they can reach to about sixty-six years. They say that that is near enough, and call it seventy years; but it is a purely arbitrary process, and is beneath the notice of any intelligent and respectable critic.

Again, Ezekiel in the twenty-sixth chapter makes a definite prophecy that Tyre, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, was to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and his

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army. It was to be utterly destroyed, so that the bare rock on which it was built was to be a place for the spreading of nets by the fishermen. The city of Tyre has been destroyed, and there is not much left but the bare rocks; and the fishermen have probably spread their nets a great many times on them since that day. But the critical point is that it was not done by Nebuchadnezzar, nor for a great many years after his time. It was really destroyed by Alexander the Great, when going East for the conquest of Persia. So this prophecy was not fulfilled.

Take that prophecy supposed to be connected with the New Testament and the development of Christianity. Isaiah says, A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel. Then, it goes on to say that, before this child grows to be old enough to distinguish good from evil, a definite event, which is close at hand, shall happen. This prophecy has been always applied to Jesus, and it has been supposed to be a confirmation of the most stupendous miracle of history. In the first place, Isaiah does not say anything about a virgin: he simply says a young woman. For all that the word means in the original, she might have been married half a dozen times. Then, it is definitely stated that the event which is to take place is not in any far distant future. It is to occur before the child shall be old enough to know good from evil. It is only a faith so blind that it will not see, that dares, in the face of modern scholarship, to bring up a case like this as an example of a prophecy relating to a far distant event, and to claim that it has been fulfilled.

I say then, in general terms, that there is not a single case in the Old Testament of a distinct and definite prophecy of a distant event, where there is satisfactory proof that it was ever fulfilled. The prophets themselves did not claim to exercise any such power of foretelling events.

What did they do? They did just what any of us can do in a measure. If, for example, I should examine a railroad bridge, and find one of the abutments or piers was crum-

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bling, and that with every train that went over it it grew weaker and weaker, it would not take any supernatural knowledge to say that some day the bridge would fall, and involve ruin and disaster. If I were to see that there were a growing hatred of France on the part of Germany, and a growing power in Germany to accumulate money, to equip and train magnificent armies, and if, by and by, something should happen to give Germany the opportunity it desired to declare a war with France, it would not require supernatural knowledge to prophesy desolation as the result. If I see any one of you breaking the laws of health, it does not need divine inspiration to foretell the sequel.

These prophets then foretold that, unless people repented and forsook their evil ways, such and such calamities would naturally and necessarily follow; and this grew out of their belief that God was a sovereign who loved righteousness, and would not suffer his laws to be permanently disobeyed. This is the sum of what is genuine and worthy your notice among the prophecies of the Old Testament.

I want to give you one or two illustrations outside of the Bible, to show you that there is no need of supernatural aid to foretell some things which are very startling. Look at the prophecies of Lord Chesterfield, of Arthur Young, of William Cobbett, of Heine, of David G. Crowley. If they had been in the Old Testament, they would have been picked out as those of the most astonishing nature. They are more definite in their terms, and more completely fulfilled, than anything that the Bible anywhere contains. Lord Chesterfield was that famous dandy; a writer and thinker of a certain sort, a person of whom some one once said that he would have been a philosopher, if the universe had been a drawing-room; a man of no character, one far from the ideal of a prophet. He prophesied, long before the time, the coming of the French Revolution. Arthur Young, a traveller and shrewd thinker and observer, prophesied the same thing, when no one in Europe dreamed of its possibility. William Cobbett did a more wonderful thing.

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He was a farmer of marked ability, a good thinker, a writer of good English. At the very beginning of this century, he prophesied the secession of the Southern States. David G. Crowley, in a magazine which was published in New York in 1872,— which is no longer published,— prophesied the great panic which swept over this country and ruined so many business men. He went so far as to say that this would probably be precipitated by the failure of the Northern Pacific Railroad and the bankers connected with it. But the most remarkable prophecies of the modern world are those of Heine, the German poet, a man of whom it has been said that he read all the sanctities of morals and religion backward, a man who was bitter, cynical, malevolent toward his enemies, ungrateful to his friends, thoughtless, sarcastic; not a man that would be supposed to be selected by the Supreme Being as a medium of prophecy. He prophesied, long before Europe and America dreamed of such a thing, the war between Germany and France, and that France would be utterly overthrown; he spoke of the line of forts which Thiers was building around Paris, and that the enclosing army would crush the city like a contracting iron shroud; that the communists would arise in their fury; that they would strike at the fine public buildings, and the higher developments of science and art; and that, in the midst of great popular disturbances, they would hurl the Vendôme column to the ground. These are specimens of some secular prophets and their work. I venture to say that nothing in the sacred literature of the world is so definitely outlined and so exactly fulfilled. They were based upon a skilful reading of the forces of the world and upon a knowledge of the laws of cause and effect.

Prophecy in Israel at last died out, and was superseded by the Law and its interpretations in the synagogues; and the synagogues were the direct predecessors of the Christian Church.

We need not regard it as a loss that there is no power of foreseeing the future. It would undoubtedly be to us a

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calamity; and yet we do have the power to read just as much of it as we need to know. As Patrick Henry once said, No one can read the future, except in the light of the past. In the light of that past, tracing the causes and the forces that work in human history, we are able to tell the natural and necessary results of any forces we choose. Instead of this delusive light that comes in the absence of reason, that takes possession of the brain, and sweeps away a man's will and a man's intelligence, and utters meaningless intimations concerning the future,— instead of that, we find to-day God and his eternal truth by the development of reason, by its broadest use in every department of human life, by humbly studying the facts of the universe, and deducing their laws, and thus tracing the causes at work that have made the present and that are making the future.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

University of Michigan

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. FEBRUARY 16, 1883. No. 20.

THOMAS PAINE:

SOME LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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MR. SAVAGE was suddenly called out of the city last Sunday. This sermon was preached a year ago. A large edition, published at that time, was soon exhausted. And, as many orders for it have been received that could not be filled, the present occasion is taken for republishing it.

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Lessons from the Life of Thomas Paine.*

WERE I to take as my theme the name of any man, whether he was high or low, rich or poor, noble or mean, who has been mentioned by any of the so-called sacred writers, it would be universally admitted that I was keeping within the limits of the propriety of the Sunday morning discourse. However contemptible he might have been, or however much injury he might have wrought his own or succeeding times, still this would have been admitted as proper. But, when one goes outside of the names of those who make up a part of what is called sacred history, and dares to introduce some other name, however high, however grand or noble, he lays himself open at least to the imputation of turning what ought to be a sermon into a lecture, and what ought to be regarded as sacred into something secular and profane. But you know me well enough by this time to understand that I repudiate distinctly and definitely any such line of demarcation. The God that I worship, and in whom I believe, is the ever-living God, who was and is and shall be. And I believe that his laws and principles are as much at work to-day as ever they were in the history of the Jews. Therefore, rightly looked at, all history has about it an element of sacredness. And, wherever we can find a life or deeds or events that are capable of stimulating, lifting up, thrilling the heart of man, and furnishing additional motive power for that which is good; wherever we can find that which is fit "for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness,"—there I hold that the preacher has a right to select his theme.

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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I have chosen for my subject this morning some lessons from the life of Thomas Paine. I have done it because of the day. In the year 1737, on the 29th of January, one hundred and forty-five years ago,* in the town of Thetford, England, Thomas Paine was born. It is a part of my purpose, in as brief and condensed a way as possible, to give you just an outline, roughly sketched, of his life. I want the man first, what he is, to stand before you. If you already understand his career, you will not question my right to make him my theme to-day. If you know nothing of it, permit me to say that it is time you did. If there is in the hearts or thoughts of any of you a prejudice against him or against his work, then all the more need that I should help,— not him, he needs no help,— but you to be delivered from the slavery of prejudice and the injustice of your thoughts against him.

He was born in a poor and humble way. His father was a Quaker, and his mother a member of the Church of England. Where he picked up his education, it is perhaps now impossible to discover; but, for the work that was to make him useful and famous in after ages, he was grandly educated. He was master of a style that, for the purpose for which he wielded it, has been unsurpassed in the history of man. Where he got it, no one can tell, any more than we can tell where the bird gets his song. His youth — for he left home early — was spent in teaching, in mercantile pursuits, and in the service of a small civil office in England. In 1774, having come under the influence of Benjamin Franklin in London, and through him becoming interested in the future of America, he came to this country. His first work here was the editing of a magazine; and, as he was the first paid editor in America, he may rightly be regarded, from our stand-point, as the founder of the editor's office and work, as distinct from that of publisher.

He soon became interested in the cause of the colonies, and gathered around him all those men who were noblest and greatest and best, and whose names to-day form a

*Spoken 1882.

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galaxy of brightness and glory; and Paine's name belongs in that galaxy, although to-day it is like that seventh star of the Pleiades, withdrawn for a little from sight, but which by and by shall shine with a lustre surpassed by none of the mighty ones of those days, which in his own words were "the times that tried men's souls." Some one has drawn a very striking picture of the little group of men, four in number, Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Rush, John Adams, and George Washington, who, one evening in the twilight, were sitting with hushed voices, conversing together under their breath on the great questions that were agitating the age. Soon there comes in the fifth, Thomas Paine; and, as he converses with them, he thrills their souls and kindles their hopes concerning the great possible future of this mighty country. And, when he has finished, so real and deep an interest has he aroused that Washington grasps him by both hands, and begs him to write these words in a book, that they may go forth to kindle the same enthusiasm that they had incited in the hearts of this little circle of intimate friends. And the result of this was that, in the beginning of the year 1776, that little pamphlet, destined to be famous for ages, *Common Sense*, was given to the world. Its effect was unsurpassed in the history of anything that was ever written or published. As a match touching a train of powder sets a magazine in a blaze, so these fiery words of his set the whole country on fire; and the result, as stated by those who were acquainted with the fact, was that, but for the publication at this time of this pamphlet, the fourth of July of that year would never have seen the Declaration of Independence. The declaration itself was hardly more than an epitome or summing up of the principles of this pamphlet. The most conservative thinkers say that it hastened the declaration by many weeks. About this time, the disastrous battle of Long Island was fought, which left the colonists disheartened and discouraged; and it is a serious question whether the Declaration of Independence would have followed, had it not been for the publication of *Common*

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Sense. At any rate, we may say that the publication of that work caused the birth *at that time* of this great country of which we are a part and of which we are justly so proud.

All through the war, in one capacity or another, Paine devoted himself to the interests of the people, raising money abroad or acting as aide-de-camp to General Green, or as secretary of one of the great committees of Congress, publishing now and then a new edition or a new part of some one of his fiery and inspiring works. He did perhaps more than any other one man, out of the army, to bring about the consummation that, at last, after those long and weary years, was achieved. So good an authority as John Adams has said that "Washington would have wielded his sword in vain, had not it been for the assistance of the pen of Paine."

After the success of our arms in this country, Paine, interested not only in one nation or people, but in the liberty and deliverance of humanity from tyranny of every kind, went to France, to repeat, if he could, the work he had helped to achieve here. After rendering so distinguished services to that country as to make himself universally known,— for his work and writings had preceded him,— he went to England for a time. But his intérest in France was such that he could not prolong his stay. France called him back; and so great was the public expectation and desire for him that, when he landed at Calais, the guns thundered their welcome, and from the vast throngs of people gathered to greet him there went up prolonged and ringing shouts of *Vive Thomas Paine!* So popular was he all over the country that he was elected at once from four different departments a member of the National Convention of France, and here he repeated the service he had rendered to America. He was a member of the committee appointed to draft a new constitution for the nation.

But, suddenly, his power is lost, and why? He was charged with being a foreigner, although he had become an adopted citizen of France; but the real gravamen of the charge was

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that he was merciful, for he dared to defend the life of the deposed and dishonored king.

After his life was saved in the most wonderful way, he returned to this country, old and worn out; and, after declining high office at the hands of the government, he retired to his estate in New York, and there lived quietly with the few friends that the prejudice and slanders of his enemies had left to him, and died in peace with all mankind, in simple trust in God, and in the hope of a future life.

And now, not attempting to cover so wide and grand a theme as this, I will simply give one or two of the main lessons of his life that will illustrate in part what was true of the whole.

In the first place, let me indicate to you his character as a patriot. In these days,— I do not call them degenerate, for I am not a believer in the degeneracy and decline of the world: only I do believe that it passes through seasons when there is less devotion to those principles that ought to interest the hearts and lives of all than there ought to be,— in these days, when it is so rare to find a man who serves his country simply for his country's sake; when under the dominant system of our civil service it is so difficult to find a man who does not make public business subserve his own personal ends, to reward his friends or punish his enemies; who does not seek office in order to accomplish this or that partisan object,— in days like these, we ought to be inspired and lifted up in looking at a figure so grand, so devoted, so unselfish, as that of Thomas Paine.

Let me give you one or two instances of the way in which he served his country. During his life there was somewhere in the neighborhood of five hundred thousand copies of his works published and sold. For all of this, he accepted not one cent. Why? He refused the copyright, in order that the editions of his works might be made so cheap that they should be accessible to all whom he desired to reach and influence. Thus, he gave the fruits of his brain for his whole life long to the good, as he believed, of his fellow-men.

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Again, at the time when Congress was reduced to the lowest extremity, without means to carry on the war, what did Thomas Paine do? A poor man himself, for he kept himself poor by his generosities and public services, he started a subscription, headed by $500 from himself, every dollar he had in the world; and the result was that, by the enthusiasm which he kindled, he raised the sum of $300,000. The work of Congress went on once more, and the success of our arms was assured.

All through his long life, he declined ever to press the matter of his services on the country. After his return from France, both Washington and Jefferson urged him to lay his case before the American Congress, and to appeal for recompense for his generous service. He persistently declined, and from the first until the last he never asked one single cent; he never asked for office or honor; he never asked emoluments; he never sought even a place for a friend. He devoted himself to the country, and sought nothing but the welfare of those he tried to serve. It is indeed true that in his old age (and this refutes one of the slanders circulated against him) the General Assembly of the State of Pennsylvania made him a large present of money in consideration of his public service. Congress too, by a special act, made him a present about the same time; and the State of New York, by special act, gave him an estate in the country, so that his last years were rich, for those days, and supplied with abundance for all his needs and desires. The same characteristic, however, followed him to the last. There was a man in Paris who had been an intimate friend and coworker in the cause of freedom; and Paine, having no relatives or friends here who had any just claims upon him, when he died, left by his will his entire fortune to this friend and his wife and children, because they had been made poor by the exigencies of the political condition of the time. Thus, from first to last, he gave heart, brain, thought, time, money, "asking for nothing again."

Not only is there a lesson of patriotism here, but there is

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a broader lesson,—a lesson of humanity. There is something larger than a man's country. Paine has written those words which ought to be engraven on the heart of every man, "The world is my country." We have not yet outgrown the narrowness of these little petty divisions of race, religion, speech, political frontier, that keep men apart and postpone the day when humanity shall be harmonized and free. The old prejudice concerning some imaginary ancestor; the prejudice that some imaginary divine power bids us love our friends and hate our enemies; the prejudice like that of ancient Athens, when Plato commended them as valiant citizens for hating everything foreign; the prejudice like that of the English officer, who said he hated a Frenchman as he did the devil; the prejudice that leads Americans, Englishmen, Germans, and almost every race under heaven, to sacrifice the welfare of others to the aggrandizement of their own land, which turns selfishness into a virtue,—are not these prejudices universal even yet?

But a hundred years ago Thomas Paine thundered forth the words that will echo louder and louder up the ages, until they are the inspiring and guiding motto of the human race,—"The world is my country." And so he was as ready to help France as America, England as France. It was man he tried to serve, it was man that he sought to lift up; and this was ever the inspiring and guiding principle of his life.

Another lesson, and this one, I believe you will agree with me, is one of the most wonderful that the annals of history can boast,—a lesson of magnanimity, generosity, and love for men, although one may hate the principles that men hold. While Paine was a member of the National Convention in Paris, he had gathered with a few friends one day at a *café*. An English officer was present, not one of the party, but near enough to overhear the conversation that was going on. Paine, bold as ever in the proclamation of the principles he held, was upholding his republican views, and advocating the abolition of monarchy, even in England. The English officer became so enraged that he began wordy abuse, and did not

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end even there; for at last he was so transported and beside himself with anger that he struck Paine a violent blow with his cane. In the condition of things at that time in Paris, this blow was not only something to be resented by his friends, but, as Paine was a member of the National Convention, it was treason against the State and punishable by death. Men who prate of honor would consider that Paine had been justified, if he had challenged his offender to a duel. The friends of Paine seized the Englishman, he was thrown into prison, tried, and condemned to death. But Paine was indefatigable in attempting to rescue his enemy, and at last succeeded in delivering him from those who were ready to avenge the insult. And, as he was now poor and destitute, Paine, out of his own funds, supplied his personal needs, and gave him money to take him home to England. That was the method of his personal revenge.

Another illustration, and this constitutes one of the sublimest pictures in all history. Paine was in Paris when King Louis XVI. attempted to fly. You remember the story, how he was captured on the frontier and brought back again. Paine advocated that the National Convention should construe this as a voluntary abdication, but against his wise counsels he was reinstated on the throne. After a little while, the king's life itself was threatened; and he who had been worshipped as the representative of God on earth, a king by divine right, was to be tried by an assembly of the people for his life. You can imagine, for indeed you know from history, what a scene was then enacted. The excitable Parisian populace, thirsty as tigers of the jungle for blood, indignant at the wrongs of ages, poured out all the fury that had been gathering for centuries in the reservoirs of their national hate on the head of him who was comparatively innocent, more a victim of the system than a real enemy to the people. You can imagine the excitement, the anger, and the determination on the part of the people that monarchy, in the person of the king, should be made to suffer. But Paine, penetrating as he ever did beyond persons, beyond

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things, to the principles that underlie them, hated not monarchs, but monarchies. He hated the system which oppressed and kept men down, and at the risk of his own life, knowing what the issue would be, deliberately set himself to the Herculean task, single-handed and alone, of saving, if possible, the life of the dishonored king. Yet what was the king to him, Louis Capet as he called him? He was no friend to Paine. Had he regained his crown, he would have been ready to make Paine and all his compatriots suffer the extremity of death.

Let me in a few words picture the scene. Here is the National Assembly; the king on trial for his life. Paine alone rises and pleads for that life, asks them to destroy the monarchy, but save the king, and to give him an asylum in America. The whole multitude are enraged against him for daring to speak such words, for daring to oppose the will of the assembly, and one man rushes to the tribune where he cries out, "These are not the words of Thomas Paine." But Paine, standing there in the simplicity of his Quaker garb, replies, "These are my words"; and the whole assembly is in confusion. The result was what Paine well knew it might be. He was arrested and thrown into prison, as a covert friend of the monarch. While he was in prison, there occurred one of the most marvellous escapes known to the world. Had Paine been a saint, it would have been called a miracle, it would have been declared a special providence. Just before he went to the prison of the Luxembourg to share imprisonment with hundreds of others waiting the day of their execution, he had left with a friend the first half of his book, *The Age of Reason.* If this had been an orthodox work, Paine's escape would have been considered a miracle worthy to be recited in pulpits and works of devotion from that day to this. Nearly all of his friends were guillotined. Night after night, or toward the early morning, the prisoners heard the death tumbril carrying its load toward the Place de la Révolution, food for that knife to whose red edge clung the gray hairs of old men, the

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tresses of beautiful women, the curling locks of young men. Paine, shut up here with his compatriots, knew that any day it might be his turn to follow them; and the day did come. It is evening. To-morrow, over a hundred others are to be guillotined. But, as the jailer goes his rounds with his chalk to mark the doors of those condemned, the outer door of the cell of Paine happens to be standing open. The jailer does not notice it. He makes his mark as usual, and passes on. A little later, the door is shut, and the chalk mark is *inside* and out of sight. And thus wonderfully is saved the life of Thomas Paine; for all the rest that were to die with him were guillotined with the light of the next rising sun. A few days after, Robespierre fell; and it was only a question of time when Paine should be free.

These, then, as illustrations of the magnanimity, the generosity of heart of this man who has been so vilified and cursed and slandered from that day to this. He stood up at the risk of his life to save a dishonored and discrowned king who was his enemy! If you can point out to me any other scene in history to match it, save that of him who on the cross prayed for his murderers, you will have discovered what I have never been able to find.

I pass to Paine's religious opinions. He is called popularly an atheist and an infidel. He is called by all the vituperative words that can be found in the dictionary or can be coined by human spite or malice. That he really did believe in one God and in a future life, and that the essence of religion was doing good, that it was doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God, is proved by his own words. His religious ideas were the very ideas of Franklin, of Jefferson, of many leading thinkers in England, France, and America at that time. I am not going to advocate those ideas. I am not going to defend nor express my opinion as to whether they were true or false. I only wish to point out the injustice of singling out his name for infamy, while men are ready to worship those who believed substantially the same as he did.

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You remember, among the Spartans, children were taught that it was a virtue to steal, if they could do it wisely and successfully; but it was a crime, to be met with the severest punishment, if they were discovered. Some one has very wittily said that the eleventh commandment is, "Thou shalt not be found out." A great many people apparently lay more emphasis on this than on all the other ten. The crime of Paine, and the only crime, as far as I have been able to discover, is that he was found out. He was not found out in doing something of which he was ashamed. He voluntarily opened his heart and life to the inspection of the world. He believed so earnestly in the principles he held that he dared to utter and defend them, believing that it was as needful that the mind and heart of man should have their fetters broken as that the body should be free. And the long life of Paine was spent in the endeavor to break the fetters of mankind. Paine was the first man in America who deserves the name of an abolitionist. He was the first man brave enough to advocate the doctrine which he put into the words, "Man has no property in man." He was the first man to advocate universal freedom in America; and by a curious coincidence his life is connected wonderfully with that other man, whom we always think of when the proclamation of emancipation is mentioned. On the day of Paine's death, Abraham Lincoln was born. He who sowed the seed died on the year of the birth of him who gathered the perfected fruit. Paine, then, was all his life long an enemy of slavery, fighting for the rights of man.

Passing by a thousand things that are crowding in my mind and begging for utterance, I have time only to touch one other point.

I want to explain how and why it has come about that Paine's name is one to utter with an apology, if it be uttered at all. His opinions, I have told you, were those of many of the leading men of his time. Why, then, has he been so vilified? The answer will bear on the methods of religious warfare. Paine died, as I have told you, expressing in his

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will (written a few months before his death) his trust in God; and in calmness and peace he looked forward to the future. He had been dead but a little while when, all over the United States, stories began to be circulated representing him to have been a drunkard, a debauchee, as having recanted his religious ideas on his death-bed, and having died in an agony of terror, looking forward to the future with fear, and receiving in anticipation something of the punishment that the Orthodox Church is generously ready to concede that he must have been suffering from that day to this. Even liberals are ready to repeat the slander; for only a week ago, in a sermon preached by a gentleman who has recently come out of Orthodoxy, and afterward printed in the *Christian Register*, there is a repetition of the hundred-times refuted slander of the agony of Paine's death-bed.

Up to the last year of his life, he was the near friend of the best men in America. When he left France to return to this country, the President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, sent a national ship to convey him home; and he was received with one shout of welcome from North to South, and from East to West. He was offered public position by the President, and by Congress. He was honored by resolutions passed by different States and cities, and by Congress itself. Is it possible that such a man in the last four or five years of his life should suddenly become a drunkard, a debauchee, everything horrible? Do you not know that most men's characters are fixed by thirty, that it is very rare for a man in his old age to turn back on the principles of thought and action that have guided him all through life? Undoubtedly, he drank more or less. So did everybody at that day. Ministers, deacons, all drank. Funerals and weddings were occasions for general drinking. But there is no reason to suppose that Paine drank any more than the average minister of his time did.

What, then, is the ground for all this vituperation? You find the answer in the *Age of Reason*. Paine dared to write and print that book in contravention of all the accepted

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principles of the Orthodoxy of the age. But is it very radical to-day? He believed substantially the same things which were at the heart of the creed of Theodore Parker. There are men, scholars, dignitaries of the Church, teachers and overseers in orthodox institutions, bishops, leading men in Europe and America, who to-day publicly advocate most of the essential principles of the writings of Thomas Paine, and no one hears a word against it. But he was so blackened and vilified at that day that it is almost impossible to go back and do him justice. All these slanders we can trace to their source.

There was a man by the name of Cheatham,—a name exceedingly appropriate to his character,—who had been a friend and co-worker of Thomas Paine in early life. Afterward becoming a Tory, Paine fought against his principles. Cheatham went back to England; and, wishing to reinstate himself with the royal party, he wrote a Life of Paine, by which at the same time he thought to revenge himself. In that Life of Paine appeared for the first time these venomous and utterly baseless slanders. This man was afterward arrested and punished as a libeller for statements contained in this very book. Yet it is on the basis of stories so originated that Thomas Paine has been defrauded of his honor from that day to this.

Another source of these slanders was a servant-girl who used to carry little delicacies from her master to Paine during his last sickness. She was hired to lie about him, and she told a lot of things he said to her, when, as a matter of fact, it has been proved that she never saw him or exchanged a word with him. The master of this servant-girl testified that he himself had been offered large sums of money if he would consent to say that Paine had recanted his religious views before his death. These infamous falsehoods are simply evidences of the fright and fear of the Church at that time. They thought to lie him into infamy, and they have too nearly succeeded. It is time for us to scrape away this debris, and give the soul of Paine the resurrection to honor that belongs to it.

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Many other services of Paine might be pointed out that deserve cordial recognition on the part of America. But so great an influence have these slanders acquired that, in our centennial year, when his friends wished to place his bust in Independence Hall, where it ought to be as much as that of Washington himself, the request was refused, because Paine was supposed to have been such an awful infidel.

Paine stood ever for liberty of body, mind, and soul. He stood for the advance, the elevation, the education of humanity. The ideas which have created for us the grandeur of our republic were his ideas. We are living out and illustrating them; and, by and by, the other freedom, freedom for the mind, freedom to think, freedom to hope, these also will be conceded. And when the temple of human liberty and human worship shall have been reared and completed, and when all men shall walk in this temple's courts and have access to its holy of holies, and shall be free in body, in mind, and in soul, and when on the foundation stones of this temple shall be inscribed the names of its illustrious builders, in no inconspicuous place shall appear, carved imperishably, the name of Thomas Paine. Spite and ignorance and malignity may fling their vituperative mud at it, but the mud will not remain. It will fall away, and the name shall shine out still. Malicious fingers, turned by hate to claws, may seek to tear away the letters, but they shall be written there in adamant; and by and by there shall be rendered to him the full meed of praise that his services to America and mankind have earned.

EXTRACTS FROM PAINE.

(Read as a part of the service.)

"O ye that love mankind! ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. Oh, receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind."

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"These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph."

"A generous parent should say, 'If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace.'"

"He that rebels against reason is a real rebel; but he that, in defence of reason, rebels against tyranny, has a better title to 'Defender of the Faith' than George III."

"To argue with a man who has renounced the use and authority of reason, and whose philosophy consists in holding humanity in contempt, is like administering medicine to the dead."

"It is not every country, perhaps there is not another in the world, that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of the Revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the universe, was originally a band of ruffians. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America need never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor relate the stages by which she rose to empire."

"Such is the irresistible nature of truth that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing. The sun needs no inscription to distinguish him from darkness."

"With respect to what are called denominations of religion, if every one is left to judge of his own religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is wrong: but, if they are to judge of each other's religion, there is no such thing as a religion that is right; and, therefore, all the world is right or all the world is wrong. But, with respect to religion itself, without regard to names, and as directing itself from the universal family of mankind to the divine object of all adoration, it is man bringing to his Maker the fruits of his heart; and, though these fruits may differ from each other like the fruits of the earth, the grateful tribute of every one is accepted."

"Every religion is good that teaches man to be good."

"Who art thou, vain dust and ashes! by whatever name thou art called,—whether a king, a bishop, a church, or a state, a parliament, or anything else,—that obtrudest thine insignificance between the soul of man and his Maker?"

"For my own part, I am fully satisfied that what I am now doing—with an endeavor to conciliate mankind, to render their condition happy, to unite nations that have hitherto been enemies, and to extirpate the horrid practice of war, and break the chains of slavery and oppression—is acceptable in his sight; and, being the best service I can perform, I act it cheerfully."

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"When it shall be said in any country in the world, 'My poor are happy; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars; the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive; the rational world is my friend because I am the friend of its happiness,'—when these things can be said, then may that country boast of its constitution and its government."

"I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life."

"I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy."

"I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise: they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man that he be mentally faithful to himself."

"I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies to another this makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it."

"The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall."

"Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the real character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man."

"The word of God is the creation we behold. And it is in this word, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man."

"Any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

"I have lived an honest and useful life to mankind. My time has been spent in doing good, and I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my creator, God."

THE AMERICAN SONG.

(Words by M. J. Savage. Music by Signor Cirillo. Sung by the choir at the close of the service.)

What song shall America sing,
  Young heir of the elder world,
Whose knee ne'er bent to a tyrant king,
  Whose banner defeat ne'er furled?
A song for the brave and the free,
  No echo of ancient rhyme,
But a shout of hope for the day to be,
  The light of the coming time.

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From the dark lowlands of the past,
  Swelling loud o'er the victim's cries,
The hero's shout sweeps up the blast
  Where wounded Freedom dies.
The drum's dull beat and the trumpet's blare
  From the far-off years are heard;
But the pæan of kings is man's despair,
  And the hope of the world deferred.

'Tis the song of the free we sing,
  Of a good time not yet born,
Where each man of himself is king;
  Of a day whose gladsome morn
Shall see the earth beneath our feet
  And a fair sky overhead;
When those now sad shall find life sweet,
  And none shall hunger for bread.

Sing then our American song:
  'Tis no boast of triumphs won
At the price of another's wrong,
  Or of foul deeds foully done.
We fight for the wide world's right,
  To enlarge life's scope and plan,
To flood the earth with hope and light,
  To build the Kingdom of Man.

NOTE.—I am no disciple or indiscriminate admirer of Paine. To say that he had many faults is only to say that he was a man. To say that he had more than most of his compatriots is probably not true. His treatment of the Bible was valid enough in his day, and as against the Orthodoxy of his day was unanswerable; but it is much behind the scholarly criticism of this age, and is now chiefly valuable as a part of the history of past opinion. The *soul* of his political and religious opinions is immortal, and will reincarnate itself in ever higher forms as man advances.

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SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. FEBRUARY 23, 1883. No. 21.

SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

5. THE WRITINGS.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE WRITINGS.*

SOME time after the return of the Jews from captivity, that section of the Old Testament which went by the name of the Law, the principal part of which was the Pentateuch, came into its present condition. It is said that Ezra returned from Babylon with the law of the Lord in his hand. Some time after this,— that is, about the fifth century before Christ, — the second collection of the Old Testament was made, and generally accepted among the people. This second collection went by the name of the Prophets, and it is this of which I treated in my last discourse.

After the Law and the Prophets had been collected, and had been received universally by the people, and had acquired that character of peculiar sacredness which made them regarded as the very word of God, there still remained a large body of miscellaneous writings which had not yet acquired this character of sacredness. They were coming, however, to be looked upon as having a peculiar, precious character or quality, which set them apart from any and all other books excepting those which were already accepted in the canon. These miscellaneous writings were twelve in number. They were the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. These were the twelve books which made up the collection which was called the Writings.

In the New Testament, when you find the Old Testament referred to, it is generally under the name of the Law and the Prophets, or the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. Jesus is sometimes represented as using this last phrase, the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Those three

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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terms cover the whole of the Old Testament literature, the word "Psalms" being used first as the most important part of the collection, and thus giving name to the whole. I remember James Freeman Clarke published a volume of sermons, in which the name of the first sermon is used as the title of the whole book. In just this way, the third collection went by the name of the Psalms, because it was the first and most important part.

I shall not be able to go into any minute and critical examination of each of these twelve books, for I neither have time nor is it necessary for the purpose I have in view. My object is to consider the origin, authority, and authenticity of the books that make up our Bible, so that we may understand how we ought to treat them, how much obedience we ought to yield to them, and what relation they bear to the other great books of the world, what relation they bear to the conduct of our daily life.

It will not be necessary for me to touch at length on many of these books. I will only characterize them in a word, and concentrate the attention of the morning on three or four of chief importance.

The Chronicles in the Hebrew copy of the Scriptures stood as the very last book, although it has been placed before the Prophets in our modern collection. It is a somewhat loosely written history, derived from the Temple archives and historical records, which either were not accessible to the writer of Samuel and Kings, or which for one reason or another he failed to use. It is of no special importance, and need not detain us.

Daniel has played a very important part in the history of Christian speculation. It stands, as you know, as the fourth of the major prophets, and goes by the name of prophecy. During the larger part of the Christian centuries, it has been understood that it was written by Daniel himself during his captivity in Babylon, and that it is a distinct prophecy concerning great future events which, in majestic figure and vision, are outlined and foreshadowed. Yet the Book of

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Daniel, as a matter of fact, was the very last one which the Jews received into their canon. Instead of having been written in the sixth century, it was written probably in the second century, during the time of some of the Jewish wars, perhaps under the tyranny of Antiochus, with the purpose of encouraging the people in times of very great oppression. Yet this book has been characterized in all earnestness as a "pious fraud," meaning by that not what we should mean, were that term used to characterize any modern composition. The writer of Daniel had no idea of doing anything wrong. He believed he was justified in the work in which he was engaged. He was an earnest lover and friend of his people, and desired to comfort them, and strengthen their hearts and hands in the great conflict in which they were engaged, to keep them patient until they should be victorious and reorganized. He writes this book, and attributes its authorship to Daniel, a person who lived some hundreds of years before. He thought, by sending it out under the authority of this great name, it might speedily take hold of the popular mind and heart, and produce the desired effect. Yet this book has been the one to which the Second Adventists have appealed. A book from whose mystical figures people have dared to read the future, year after year and age after age, dealing with "a time, times, and a half," with the big horn and the little horn, and with the beasts, in their endeavor to picture the future course and destiny of nations. You will judge from the time when the book was written how very little profit there has been in this kind of speculation.

Esther is a very peculiar book, one that the Jews long looked at askance before receiving it into their canon. It is marked by the fact that it does not contain the name of God, and has no religious character about it whatever. The Jews, while they were in captivity, adopted a feast called the Purim, which became one of their most famous feasts, and to which they were greatly attached. After the return from the captivity, it was difficult to make this feast popular in

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Palestine. Undoubtedly for the purpose of giving a plausible Jewish origin to this festival, and to make it acceptable to the Palestine Jews, this book was written. At least, such is its probable scope and purpose.

Ruth is a beautiful pastoral idyl, one of the most beautiful things in the whole Bible. Its whole purpose, so far as we can see, and that which made it so dear to the popular heart, is the fact that it traces the supposed genealogy and origin of David, their favorite king and their ideal national hero.

Lamentations is simply an anonymous book, written in a strain of elegy, and mourning over the desolations of the people.

Ezra and Nehemiah, two books, though substantially one, give us an account of the history of the revival of the Jewish people and the reorganization of their national religion after their return from the captivity.

The Book of Proverbs, supposed to have been written by Solomon just as it stands, indicates on its surface that it has a divided authorship. The last chapter, it is said, was written by the mother of King Lemuel, another by Agur. Whole chapters throughout the book are not proverbs at all, but ethical treatises, containing advice from one who has been through life and learned its temptation and meaning. They could not have been written by Solomon or by any one man. Many of the proverbs are not even of Jewish origin. But the tendency to attribute such a book to a particular author is perfectly natural. As if to-day I should make a collection of prudential maxims such as Poor Richard made himself famous for, and entitle it Maxims by Benjamin Franklin and others, and the book should grow and additions be made to it, it would be easy for the popular mind to think that he was the author of them all. People would cease to make any distinction between his maxims and the others. They would quote these maxims as though all belonged to Poor Richard's sayings. In this way, the Book of Proverbs has probably grown. Solomon

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had a great reputation among his people for shrewd observation, for wise and witty sayings. He was skilled and experienced in interpreting riddles and solving problems of nature and of life; and he came to stand in their minds as a representative proverb-maker, and tradition associates his name with this collection. This tendency is perfectly natural. You constantly hear people quoting sayings from Sydney Smith which may possibly have been familiar to ancient Rome or Greece, or possibly may have originated last year in a Western newspaper, but attributed to him, because he is the representative wit of the English people; and it is safe to suppose that anything witty of which the origin is not known was originated by him.

Let me now concentrate my attention on the four most important books in this collection called The Writings.

First, the collection of Psalms, the Psalms of David, as they are popularly called. I used to suppose, and probably most of you were taught to believe, that, in spite of the fact that the sons of Korah and the name of Moses and other names are given as the composers of some of these psalms, yet David was the writer of them all. This, I say, is the popular idea that has been in the minds of the people for centuries.

What is this Book of Psalms? It is nothing more nor less than the Jewish hymn-book. It is the hymn-book of the second temple; that is, the temple built under the auspices of Ezra and Nehemiah on the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. As we examine the book, we find it divided into five different sections or separate classes of books or psalms. The first reaches from the second to the forty-first psalm; the second, from the forty-second to the seventy-second; the third, from the seventy-third to the eighty-ninth; the fourth, from the ninetieth to the one hundred and sixth; the fifth, from the one hundred and seventh to the one hundred and forty-ninth. You will notice that I say nothing about the first or last psalms. The first was added after the general collection was made

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as a sort of general introduction, and in the old Jewish psalm-book the second psalm counted as the first. The one hundred and fiftieth psalm was added as an epilogue to the general collection. So there were originally only one hundred and forty-eight psalms. You will find the second psalm quoted in the New Testament; and, although our translators have made Jesus quote from the second, in the original Greek he quotes from the first, because that was originally the first.

These five books were collected at five different times. I need not go critically into this. The first book, either partially or entirely, was brought together and was in use during the service of the first temple, the temple of Solomon. In this first book, if anywhere, we must look for some of the poetic work of King David; for, after that first book, you will probably find none of his work at all. As you look at these psalms, you will find that they have various headings, — such as "A Psalm of David," or "David's confidence in God's grace," or "David praiseth God for his deliverance," — but you are to remember as you read them that these are no part of the original work at all. All these headings and notes are the work of editors, and not of the poetical authors themselves. If you look back to your childhood, you can remember how you used to hear the minister in the pulpit, or your father at morning worship, reading, as though they were a part of the inspired Psalm, certain detached words which we now know to be a sort of musical notation. It is as though, when reading the hymn, I should read the words *andante*, *fortissimo*,— Italian words for the guidance of the musicians. So certain words, such as Selah and Higgaion, are simply indications to the singers as to how the music should be performed, whether with accompaniment of instruments or by voices alone, whether high or low, etc.

Now, a word in regard to temple music, that you may understand something as to how these hymns were used. Some were used only for special occasions, as on festivals,— as we have our Easter and Christmas hymns, suitable only to

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those occasions. Others formed part of the general service. It is stated in one place in the Bible that they had some four thousand singers. That is probably a larger number than was permanently attached to the temple. They had, however, between two and three hundred men and women engaged in the temple singing. The idea that the women must be shut off in a gallery by themselves apart from the men was not a part of the Old Testament idea of service. It was a more modern notion. There were then between two and three hundred voices. These were accompanied generally by stringed instruments simply to aid the singers, as we are accompanied by the organ to sustain and guide and direct the multitude of our voices. If you think of the three hundred men and women's voices, with lyres and harps, and now and then cymbals to mark the time, as we use them to-day, you will have a very good idea of the temple choir, as they performed their daily and Sabbath services. Only you must not think of them as singing as we do; for harmony, or the blending of the different parts of the song in one general effect, is a modern thing in music, and was unknown to the ancient Hebrews. They had no poetry in the sense in which we use that word, perfect in rhythm, time, and rhyme. Theirs was perfect only in alliteration and rhythm, or measure. There was no rhyme. Their singing was more like a chant than anything we call harmonic music: they sang only melody.

These five books, then, that make up the Psalms, were collected at different times by different editors. They came at last to be looked on as chiefly the work of David. How did this idea arise? In several ways.

Suppose I should make a collection of hymns. I might take, as a basis, "Watts and Select." If by and by that book passes out of use, and somebody else makes a collection, and carelessly marks all taken from "Watts and Select" as simply "Watts," meaning the collection and not that he was the author, when by and by "Watts and Select" should be entirely lost, many would suppose that Watts was

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the author of all the hymns bearing his name in the last collection. And remember that in those old times there was no printing, and no chance for people to correct errors by comparison. In this way, therefore, many of the old psalms that formed part of the Davidic collection, which was formed for the first temple, were transferred to the later books, and were therefore thought to have been written by David.

It is absurd to suppose that he wrote many. Let me indicate a few reasons why he could not have done so. I take one of the Psalms, for example, with reference to the temple worship. Of course, David did not refer to that. There was no temple in existence until after he was dead. If joy and love in temple worship were expressed, it was written by some one who lived after there was a temple.

Take the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, devoted to a passionate love and admiration for the law. The law came into its present shape after the captivity. Before a person could write the one hundred and nineteenth psalm, the law must have been familiar to his mind for weeks and years, until there could grow up this passionate admiration and love for it. It must have been made dear by association. It could not have been written until within a few centuries before Christ, hundreds of years after David was dead.

The one hundred and thirty-seventh psalm, beginning, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," must have been written by some one who had been in Babylon during the captivity, hundreds of years after David was dead.

How has the popular idea of David arisen? The people have assumed that David wrote the Psalms; and then they have gone to work and created an ideal sort of man, made up of the materials of which the Psalms are composed, and they call that David. That is, they have assumed that he wrote the Psalms, and have created an ideal image of such a man as would be likely to write such things as these. They have made him spiritual, noble, a monotheist, giving the highest worship to God. But look at the outlines of the early part

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of his life. He went into the wilderness at the head of a band of cut throats, murderers, and convicts of every kind, and there remained for a certain number of years, until strong enough to seize the throne. Then, he is a barbaric leader, a man of immense power and force of personality, a man of great genius, a man who first welded those conflicting tribes into one nation, but no more of a saint than Richard Cœur de Lion or Henry VIII. He was cruel and vindictive. He worshipped Yahveh; but he also worshipped Baal, and named one of his sons for him. He sacrificed the seven sons of Saul to Yahveh; and, when he conquers the Ammonites and captures one of their rebellious cities, he puts the inhabitants to the severest torture, and burns them alive. And he did this to all the captured cities of the Ammonites. This is not the kind of man you would think of as writing the poetic and beautiful and spiritual lines of many of the Psalms, that have been the comfort of souls for hundreds of years. You might as well think of Henry VIII. writing a treatise against Divorces as to suppose that King David was the author of most of the Psalms. The contradiction on the face of it is as clear in the one case as in the other.

How many did he write then? Instead of giving you my own opinion, I will give you the opinion of Prof. Robertson Smith, the author of the article on the Bible in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, one of the most eminent Biblical scholars in the world. He thinks it would be very critical to say that David did not write any. According to his opinion, he may have written the eighteenth and the seventh. He thinks it is probable he wrote them.

The Psalms, however, whoever wrote them, do not depend upon their authorship for their power and beauty. They range from the highest lyrical poetry in the world to mechanical verse without any trace of inspiration. Some are acrostics: the writer begins every line with a certain letter of the Jewish alphabet. But there are others that bubble up like springs that have their source at the very heart of the world, full of life and sun and joy forever. Some of the

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Psalms, however, derive a great part of their wealth from association. A Cremona violin is not so valuable when first constructed. After it has been used for years and years, after it has expressed the joy and sorrow of the world, until these have been wrought into it, so that it seems as though it had a soul of its own, then it becomes a valuable instrument,— valuable because of these stored-up vibrations, and worthy of the touch of the grandest master. Precisely so these Psalms have been played upon by human sympathies and hopes and fears and imaginations for centuries, until they are permeated and colored all the way through by the passionate joy and the passionate sorrow of the human heart.

As an illustration how association changes the very interpretation of the passage itself, take that familiar one, "Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." How sweet and fine this thought! — the beauty of holiness, representing a state of culture that is looked on as ideal beauty. Does the author mean that? If I should give you the original meaning, all the spiritual aspiration goes out of it. The writer simply says, I will worship the Lord in the beauty of consecrated garments, with beautiful robes and ritual. But you will never get that idea back into it again; for the heart of the world has written over that line, and filled it with spiritual meaning. So a large part of the wealth of the Psalms is not what the writer put into them, but what the experience of the world has written between the lines.

The Song of Solomon is generally spoken of apologetically. It was a long time after it was written before it was introduced into the canon. As it stands, it is the oldest book probably in Hebrew literature. It was after the time of Christ before it was admitted as a sacred book. It was cherished in the heart of the people, but they could not get over the fact that it did not appear to be at all religious. They could not find any reason for admitting it to the canon, until at last Rabbi Akiba, a man of overmastering influence, said that the whole world was not worth the day on which

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that song was given to Israel; and that fact, together with the idea that it was attributed to Solomon, settled the question, and it was admitted. The probability is that Solomon had nothing to do with it. It is sometimes charged with being an obscene and impure book. There is not a more beautiful or pure poem on the face of the earth. What does it teach? What is its moral? It is a dramatic poem, or as near that as the Jewish genius ever attained, and represents a beautiful country maiden, who is betrothed to a shepherd lad, enduring the blandishments of the courtiers who are endeavoring to lure her from her country lover, and make her the chief figure in the royal harem. In spite of all these blandishments of the gay court and city, she resists, and remains true to her rustic lover, and at last is permitted to go back to her friends, her home, and her love. That is the moral. If any one can find anything impure in that, they could question the purity of a rose in a glass vase on the parlor table. There is nothing particularly religious in this book except this undying faithfulness. Yet the heart of it is true from beginning to end. But do you suppose Solomon would sit down deliberately and write a song in which he would delineate his discomfiture, and set forth how he tried to woo and win a country maiden, and could not succeed, but had to let her go back to her country lover again? People who go through with that experience do not usually set it forth in songs of that fashion. With this conception, the song is beautiful from beginning to end.

Let us pass to Ecclesiastes. This is also one of the last books admitted to the canon. It came in with a great deal of difficulty, and probably would never have been admitted, had it not been that Solomon was supposed to be the author. His name floated it, so that it kept on the surface for years and years; and we may be thankful for this kind of half-fraud which gives his name to that book, because it is an intensely interesting specimen of ancient literature. The writer says, "I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." Take that last phrase. When Solomon was king,

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there was no king anywhere else except in Jerusalem. Why should he say that he was king *in Jerusalem?* If a President of the United States should speak of himself, he would not say, when I was President in Washington. There is no president elsewhere: why specify it in that fashion? But, in later times, there was another king at Samaria; and it would be natural for a person in a subsequent period to use such an expression. Again, Solomon would be likely to use the present tense. He was king all the time until he died. He would not write of himself in the past. Again, the writer refers to Judea as a province. It was not a province for hundreds of years after the time of Solomon. If you know the character of the book, you will see with what difficulty it must have been admitted. There is little religious in it. It is pessimistic to the last degree, hopeless of this world, despairing of human society, hopeless of the future. The writer is a fatalist. He says that the world is all vanity and vexation of spirit; that there is nothing in human life; that a person who is dead is better than one living, and one not born better than either of them; that the whole world is empty, one endless round of vanity and vexation. If a person is rich, has many gardens and much increase, he becomes satiated and tired of it all, and disgusted with life in any form. Animals and man are about on the same level: the same things happen to both; there is no future for either. It is very curious, as Mr. Chadwick has observed in a lecture on this subject, that a passage from this book intimating that there is no future life is placed over the entrance to Mt. Auburn. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." To any one familiar with Oriental thought, this simply means that the body goes back to the dust, and the spirit, that spark that we call life, goes back and loses its personality, is absorbed in the infinite God from whom it came. That is what that passage means. Thus, the Book of Ecclesiastes was put into the Jewish canon, and became a part of the Bible of Christendom, although it explicitly

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denies every tenet of Christianity. The name of Solomon floated it in. But, dreary as it is, it represents a phase of human life that finds its echo in the world to-day. It is only fair, however, to say that the last two verses contain a sentiment so noble as to redeem much that is vastly inferior.

Let us now consider perhaps the greatest book in the Old Testament, Job. When was this written? It is supposed that it was written somewhere in the neighborhood of the seventh century. It is an attempt on the part of the writer to consider the oldest and the newest problem of humanity, perennial in its interest, mighty in its hold on the thoughts and hopes and fears of man. He considers the question why it is that good men suffer, why they are in sorrow and trouble, why they are overthrown and cast down, why it is, if there is a righteous government of the universe, that there is no certain prosperity for virtue and truth; that, in spite of the good man's endeavors to do right, he may be cast down to earth, and trampled under the feet of tyranny, selfishness, and wrong. You will see the nature of the problem to the Jew, when you remember that it was the fundamental idea of his religion that Javeh was a God of righteousness who would reward the virtuous. As they expressed it, "I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread"; though I could never help feeling that the writer of that verse had had a narrow experience of life.

The Jews at this time had no real faith in any future life. There are no intimations of it until toward the very last, and then they are dim and indefinite. They teach that God will reward the righteous with long life, with health, with friends, with many children, all the elements of prosperity. That is the reward for serving Yahveh. Yet, in the face of this, they saw the righteous suffering. It was the solution of this problem that was in the mind of the great thinker who wrote this book. It was probably written not long after the death of Josiah, somewhere about 641. He was the king above all others who was their ideal for righteousness

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and truth, devotion and service to Yahveh. The prophets had long been saying that, when they should have a king true to the law, who should put down idolatry, who should serve Yahveh, they would have prosperity and victory over their enemies. Here, then, was a king faithful and true, from first to last, putting down idolatry, lifting up the law, bringing only good to Israel, yet killed in mid career, and his people overthrown. No wonder that this great loving heart and grand poetic brain, the author of Job, should be stunned and amazed at seeing all his old ideas put to rout. What does it mean? Does Yahveh really rule and care for the world? If he does, why does he permit such contradiction in human affairs? This is the problem. You remember the introduction, when Satan is represented as appearing before God. The Persian influence had not at that time affected the Jewish belief, and Satan had not developed into a hater of God. He has access to the very court of God himself, and even talks with the Lord on his throne. This introductory scene may very likely have been written by other hands: it does not settle the wonderful problem anyway. It sets forth how Job is suddenly overthrown. It lets us in behind the scenes, and lets us hear the partial solution, though it is not what we should regard as a solution to-day.

The book is dialogue in form, and is made up of conversations between Job and the three friends whom he calls miserable comforters, and an interpolated speech of Elihu. Then, Jehovah himself speaks. The speech of Elihu interrnpts the dialogue, but it does not give the solution of the problem. Does the whole book settle the question? Does it give us any answer to this great problem? Not at all. We face the mystery overhanging the world from the beginning until now. When Yahveh appears himself, and speaks out of the whirlwind, what does he say? He does not give any explanation. You have no right to question God. You must bow and submit: that is the only solution which the writer could discover. As one of the Psalmists says, "I was

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ings are full of the ideal Messiah, but he takes almost no note of Jesus of Nazareth. It is this new revelation from God, this new head of a new Christianity, with which Paul deals. Thus, we find all these influences, which had been at work during the time of which we have no record in our Scriptures, culminating at last, naturally and necessarily, in the birth of a new religion, and that new religion the one that we call Christian.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

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BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MARCH 9, 1883. No. 23.

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SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

7. THE EPISTLES.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE EPISTLES.*

As WE come from the Old Testament to the New, we notice that there are four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles that lead the list of those books that have come to be regarded as canonical. It is worthy your note, in passing, that the Acts of the Apostles does not treat in any general way of the doings of the twelve apostles, but only concerns itself with certain passages in the life chiefly of Peter and Paul. The significance of that I shall refer to later.

As I wish to treat of the New Testament in a general way, in the order of time, rather than the order in which the publishers have happened to place the books, I pass by the Gospels and the Acts and come to the Epistles; for you are probably aware of the fact that nearly all the Epistles, the principal ones most certainly, were written some time before any of the Gospels were brought into their present condition.

When the First Epistle was written, which was probably the first Epistle of Paul to the Church in Thessalonica, Jesus had been dead but about twenty years. That is, the people were then about as far away from his time as we are from the time of Abraham Lincoln, and, of course, there would be a great many persons alive who had either seen Jesus, or who had seen somebody that had seen him,—enough to keep alive and fresh the traditions of the principal events in his life, the principal phases of his doctrine, and the generally believed account of his death. We must bear in mind, however, all the way through, that these early churches did not believe that Jesus was really dead, but only that he had been withdrawn into the heavens for a

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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little time, whence he was to return again in the clouds, accompanied by an innumerable retinue of angels, to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to usher in the new kingdom of God which he was to establish here upon earth. I refer to this only to show you the general intellectual and religious atmosphere of the time when these Epistles were written.

There is another point to be noted. You will find that these letters are written to the Church in Philippi, to the Church in Ephesus, to the Church in Galatia, to the Church in Rome, etc. That is, and this is the point, the first churches, as we should naturally expect, were organized in the great cities scattered over the Roman Empire, the principal centres of intellectual life and thought. I refer to this, so as to bring you into sympathy with the natural growth of these churches, that you may see how, under ordinary human laws, they happened to be what they were.

In process of time, those who rejected the claims of Christianity came to be called pagans and heathen. Did you ever think why? The word "pagan" is from a Latin word *paganus*, which means a villager. The word "heathen" is simply heath-men, men who lived out on the heath, peasants. This suggestion is mainly interesting, as I think, because it lets us into the secret, which is true to-day just as it was then, that any new movement always finds its first footing in the town, where thought is most active, where opinions are most fluent, where it is easier to get a hearing for a new idea, and where a new thought first finds lodgement in the minds and activities of men. However sturdy and noble and grand the country may be in the make-up of its moral fibre, yet it is always a little behind the town. Just as last year's fashions are this year's fashions in the country, so the intellectual and religious fashions follow this same law: they start in the centre of intellectual activity, and then spread slowly toward the country.

These churches, then, these new organizations, were dotted here and there over the Roman Empire in the great centres

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of commercial and intellectual activity. They were not, as yet, between 50 and 60 A.D., when the first Epistles were written, very numerous, very large, or very powerful.

These little churches were simply made up of the few men who had accepted the claims of the new Messiah, and who, while they were waiting for his immediate return,— for both Jesus and Paul taught explicitly that he was to come back before that generation had entirely passed away,— would naturally place little emphasis on the affairs of this world. It is not strange, therefore, that they established practical communism, selling their houses and lands, just as in modern times Millerites have done, believing that the world was coming to an end in three, five, or ten years. What was the use of laying out schemes of business, plans for the regeneration of this world, social or political improvements? What was the use of being troubled, if Cæsar was a tyrant and was ruling the world? What was the use of mourning about these things? So Paul tells them not to be troubled, for the time is short, and the end is at hand. Therefore, they sold their property, and tried to make one another as comfortable as possible, establishing these little brotherhoods in the great centres of activity, and then, laboring and doing their daily duty as best they could, awaited the coming of the kingdom of God with its heavenly magnificence and glory. In the face of a belief like that, of course it would not occur to any one to write any Gospels. What did they want of Gospels? The people who were living already knew about Jesus, and some of them were to live until he came again. So they did not take the trouble to make any record of his life and teachings at that time.

But you will see how naturally the Epistles arose. Here were these churches, perplexed on every hand by practical questions. They had just come out of heathenism. In those days, if you were to dine with a heathen, the chances were that he would go through some religious ceremony preceding the feast, to consecrate the animal that he was to have for his dinner. It was a very vital question, then, whether the

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new churches were to be permitted to attend such feasts, and eat the meat that had been offered to idols; whether in so doing they became accomplices in idolatry. You remember how often Paul refers to this. They questioned, also, whether it was necessary to keep the Mosaic law, and they looked to their leaders for answers. Those who had seen, Jesus, or who had received traditions of him from others' lips, could have him for guidance in this matter; but others did not know just what they were required to believe, and all sorts of practical questions would naturally spring up while they were waiting for his second coming. It was to answer these difficulties and to solve these practical problems that the Epistles came to be written.

We must remember another thing. It is absurd for anybody to suppose that Paul or Peter or James, or any of the writers of the Epistles, ever had the slightest idea that these letters would become a part of a book, to be referred to as a standard of belief and doctrine eighteen hundred years after that time. And this absurdity appears in what I have already stated, that they expected the world to come to an end before the people who wrote the letters were dead. They expected Jesus to come again to earth, and reign again as their king, for at least a thousand years. This idea is still thrilling and throbbing through parts of the New Testament, especially the Apocalypse, or the Book of Revelation. It is all on tiptoe with this upward and onward looking for the coming of the Lord. When Jesus should come, there would be no reason, and almost no need, of any book to announce his will; for he himself would be the living king, dispensing his own law and executing his own judgments.

These letters, then, were simply temporary and local expedients to meet the exigencies of that time. If you read them carefully in the light of that idea, you will find nearly all your perplexities solved. It is not my purpose to go into minute criticism of one Epistle after another. Instead of any textual criticism, I wish to give some general ideas for

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which they stand; but it is worth my while to point out first one or two significant facts concerning a few of them.

Take the little Epistle of Jude. Jude says that he was the brother of James. He was not himself an apostle, but, perhaps, the brother of an apostle. There is one thing in that little letter which of itself is sufficient to forever render absurd any claim for the entire infallibility of the Bible. I have spoken to a great many orthodox ministers concerning it, who had never had their attention called to it. I spoke to you last Sunday concerning the Book of Enoch,— a wild, crude, unreliable, apocalyptic book, written within a hundred years of the time of Christ. Jude quotes it as being the work of the old patriarch, "the seventh from Adam." Here is a palpable blunder.

The Epistle of James was written apparently to offset Paul's doctrine of the justification by faith. James evidently thought Paul was pushing that too far. He said it was well enough to have faith, but you must supplement faith and manifest the reality of that faith by works, or it becomes dead and fruitless. This was the first general contribution to the seething discussion of the age.

There is no occasion for me to say anything concerning the three Epistles of John, except that there is no reason to suppose John the Apostle wrote them. Neither need I detain you with a special reference to the epistles known as the Epistles of Peter. The second certainly was not written by him, and it is doubtful about the first; but it makes little difference to us.

Concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, ordinarily called the work of Paul, there is hardly a scholar in the world who thinks that Paul wrote it. It devotes itself to an endeavor to justify Christianity to those who had come out from the Jewish Church. It shows how the old dispensation was preparatory to Christianity; that every thing prefigured it; that it represented the symbol and shadow of which Christianity is the substance and reality. This, you will see, must have met a very pressing need or want at that time, when

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one of the most important and practical questions of the Jew was whether, when he became a Christian, he was false to the old and divine dispensation which had been given to his fathers.

I wish now to confine myself entirely to the attitude and work of Paul. Paul is the great name in historic Christianity, second only in rank and dignity to that of Jesus, and not even second to him in the power which he has exerted over thought. Instead, however, of going into a general examination of the Epistles, I want, in some general, graphic way, to give you Paul's attitude toward the universe, to set forth the scheme which he held, and which he made a vital power in the development of civilization. There is no man in all the past ages more alive to-day than Paul, or who is having more to do with men that have never thought very much about it, and who have least appreciated the significance of the work which he wrought.

It is not necessary for my purpose that I should discuss all the questions that have been mooted by the critics as to whether he wrote all the Epistles that have passed under his name. It does not make any special difference to our consideration, for those doctrines which he did hold are taught in the Epistles which are undoubtedly his.

In the first place, then, in order to understand this Pauline doctrine, you must remember that he was a grand, sturdy, unfaltering believer in predestination of the most cast-iron sort. No man who ever lived has taught it more explicitly and clearly than he. God is the absolute sovereign, and he has a right through all the eternities to do whatever he will; and puny, short-sighted man has no right to question it. This is the attitude of Paul. God has a perfect right, to use his figure, to take one lump of clay, and make a vase to hold flowers in the parlor: he has a right to take another lump, and make a coarse, crude pot for use in the kitchen; and neither lump has a right to say anything about it one way or the other. He has a right to make one man for one use, and another for another,—to predestinate one to suc-

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cess and glory, to predestinate another to failure and disaster; and these have no right to question either the wisdom or justice of the dispensation. But, in justice to Paul, I wish you to note that the outcome of his doctrine is quite different from that of Calvin and modern Orthodoxy.

The next great doctrine of Paul is his uncompromising, unhesitating acceptance of the legend that teaches the fall of man. Adam, the first man, stood as the earthly head of humanity up to his time. The doctrine of the "federal headship," as it has come to be called in theology, is undoubtedly a Pauline doctrine. Man, with Adam at the head up to the time of the birth of Christ, had been simply a disastrous failure. In Adam, all died; through Adam came sin; through Adam came sorrow; through Adam came all the disasters that have ever afflicted poor, suffering humanity. Paul, of course, had none of the means of knowledge at the disposal of any intelligent man in the modern world. He did not know, therefore, that death had reigned not only since Adam and over all his descendants, but for some thousands and millions of years before Adam was ever thought of. He did not know that suffering and pain had been in existence, not only among men, but in the animal world for millions of years. If he had, he would have had no more faith in the doctrine of the fall than I have. But Paul believed in the federal headship of Adam; that he was the representative and leader of the world up to that time, and that, under his headship, the world had been a failure. Naturally, then, he turned to some scheme of recovery. He desired to find some way in which this long failure could be turned into success. He desired to find some method, a part of the secret council and fore-knowledge of God,—for not only the fall, but the redemption was part of the predestination of Paul,—by which a new order of things could be instituted, and the world be ultimately crowned with success.

Here, then, we are led to consider Paul's view of Christ. There is another thing also, at the outset, to which I wish to call your careful attention; for people seem to read the Bible

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in a blindfold and sleepy way, if they read it at all,—never thinking of comparing part with part, or treating it as they would treat any other book, or as they should, if they wish to learn anything from it. I was taught in this way myself. I was taught to read so many verses as so much religious duty accomplished, so many square inches of Bible, so much goodness. Thus, people read the Bible, never using their brains and common sense about it.

We need now to consider Paul's attitude toward Christ,—toward Christ, not toward Jesus; for it is hardly too much to say that Paul made no account of the personal Jesus whatever. I want to make that distinction clear. Paul does not have anything to say about Jesus. The only time he quotes his words is when he gives the story of the Last Supper, and, in another place, where he quotes a saying from Jesus that does not appear in the Gospels. He does not anywhere say anything about what Jesus did. He has not a hint anywhere of any miraculous conception. He speaks of no miracles in the modern sense of that word. He only refers in a general way to signs and wonders. But he believed that "speaking with tongues," that incoherent gibberish and babbling, was a miracle, so you can understand what he meant when he spoke of signs and wonders. He says nothing about his raising people from the dead or feeding the multitude. Yet you must remember that he stood nearest to Jesus of all who wrote of him in the New Testament. It is strange that he should not allude to these things in all of his Epistles. There is not a trace of his having any personal love for Jesus, the man. He says, frankly and distinctly, that he never saw him, except in a vision; and he makes so little account of these things that, when he comes up to Jerusalem and talks over the condition of the early Church with the apostles, he says they had nothing to tell him that he cared anything about,—to use his own phrase, they added nothing to him. He refers to the apostles very slightingly, "those who seemed to be somewhat," to be pillars. He speaks of them with hardly dis-

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guised antagonism and irony, and he was in antagonism with them the most of his life. You see how little account he makes of the historic Jesus. What does he make account of? Of the theologic Christ as standing for a part of the scheme of the divine economy in the salvation of the world.

There are three distinct stages of progress very perceptible in Paul's writings, as illustrating three stages of growth in his mind concerning the doctrine of Christ. In the first place, he is converted to the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. But he does not stop there. We find at the last that he had risen to the belief that Jesus was a pre-existent being; that he was the angel Messiah; that he was the first-born of every creature; that he was the beginning of the creation of God, and only less than God himself. But the great thing that he believed, whether he called him Messiah or pre-existent angel or head of the Church, was that Jesus was the head of a new and rejuvenated humanity.

I have told you what Paul believed about Adam, that he was the head of the race that was a failure. Over against Adam, the old man, he sets Christ, the new man, revealed from heaven as the new head of the new humanity. This is the most significant thing in the whole belief of Paul, so far as his doctrine of Christ is concerned. He was the head of the new order of humanity. Those who became engrafted into the Church, those who became followers and disciples of Christ, put off the old idea of Adam, sloughed off their whole association with the old and false order of humanity, and became members of this new race,— the redeemed and renovated Church of God. This is the doctrine of Paul concerning Christ.

I said, a little while ago, that the predestination taught by Paul had a far different outcome for the history of this world from that taught by Calvin and the orthodox churches of the day. He teaches that the fall of man and the redemption are parts of the one divine plan of him who, as a sovereign, works his eternal will. But he held so grand a conception

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of God that he believed it is a part of this sovereign will that the world ultimately, this whole groaning, travailing, weeping, and crying creation, shall be redeemed. So he teaches that the Jews were rejected and outcast only as a temporary thing, only as the occasion of the bringing in of the Gentiles. He teaches that, when by and by the Gentiles are all brought in, then the Jews also are to be reclaimed; and then, under Christ, there is no longer to be any Jew or Greek, any civilized or barbarian. They are all to be one as parts of this new humanity. Christ is to be the head of it, and all the world is to be brought into one under his headship. Then, at the last, Christ is to deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and God is to be all and in all.

Ultimately, then, Paul was both a Universalist and a Unitarian; for, although he teaches the pre-existence of this Christ, he teaches plainly his subordination to God, and, as the final outcome of everything, that he is to give up the kingdom to the one God, and all men are to be part of this kingdom. This is the outcome of Paul's doctrine of predestination.

I have left to the last that which is the grandest work that Paul wrought,—a work as grand as that which almost any man has ever wrought in the history of humanity.

I said in the beginning that there were two factions in the early churches. It was inevitable that there should be. Here were these Jews who had been taught and trained for ages into the belief that the Mosaic dispensation was not only divine, but eternal; that, on the basis of this, a new kingdom, after the type of the kingdom of David, was to be established, and the Jews were to rule over the world forever. But here comes in a new claimant, a new Messiah, as those who accepted the Messianic doctrine believed. And here comes Paul, organizing churches all over the Roman Empire, and saying that this divine dispensation of Judaism is obsolete and outgrown. It is very natural that it should require some time to accept so strange a doctrine as that. James said, the old first church at Jerusalem said, all the

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apostles said, You must also keep the law of Moses, or you cannot be saved. They sent their emissaries after Paul all over the Roman Empire, because they regarded him as the most dangerous heretic of the age. They felt that he was trying to do good, but that he was teaching false doctrine in saying that it was not necessary to keep the law of Moses. After a while, they found that they had to compromise, and they said, You do not have to keep all, but there are certain things you must keep; and, for a long time, they still clung to the idea of the shadow after they had given up the substance. It was ages before they gave up the notion that a Jewish Christian was not better than a Gentile one. They believed that there was an advantage in having been born in the Jewish religion. This was the origin of the great division in the Church, with Peter at the head on the one hand, and Paul at the head on the other. For a great many years, this discussion rent the Church in twain and almost threatened its existence. You find traces of it throughout the New Testament, one party hitting at the other, and that in turn striking back; Paul striking hard blows on one side, and Peter returning them on the other.

The Acts of the Apostles is a very late book. It was written after this warfare between the two churches had practically died out. It was a sort of compromise, written by somebody who wanted to unite these two factions. You will notice a strange parallelism between the sayings and doings of Paul and Peter in this book. If, in one chapter, Paul is represented as doing something wonderful, you will find Peter doing as strange a thing in the next. This book is evidently written for the express purpose of healing over this division in the Church and doing justice to both sides.

But, now, what is the point of the grand work that Paul did? If it had not been for Paul, we might not have had an historic Christianity. We should certainly have had a very different one, and not so good a one as that which we have had. It would have been impossible for the early apostles to have forced upon the Roman Empire not only a belief in

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Jesus and a belief in Christ, but also the practice of all the ritual of the Jews. If they had attempted that, the whole effort would have broken down, and Christianity would have been merely a new sect of Judaism confined to a few followers. But Paul, with his views, felt that the hour of the Mosaic ritual had struck. The past had been a failure, or at most only a type, a shadow leading on to Christ, the head of the new humanity. And so he said: The works of the law, that neither you nor your fathers could keep, are dead rubbish, to be swept away. So he dispensed with sacrifices and the Jewish Sabbath, and it may be noted he did not say anything about any other. You need not pay any attention to the laws of Moses, he said. They are all gone by. They are only a shadow leading to Christ; and, now that Christ has come, everything is summed up in faith in him. And so arose Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. He became the liberator of the world, and we are to rank him as hardly second among the great men who have snapped the shackles that have bound the freedom of the human race. Paul broke off this enclosing shell of Moses, and set civilization free. This doctrine of justification by faith was the weapon with which he did it; for he said: Whether you are Jew or Gentile, it does not make any difference. Only appropriate and incorporate into your own life the life of this new Christ. Do it by faith. If you believe and accept, you are a part of this new dispensation of God. And so Jew and Gentile, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, no matter who, any man who accepted Christ, became a part of this new kingdom of heaven; and thus all the petty, worrying, wearing, exacting, ritualistic ceremonies of the Jews were abolished at one stroke. Paul's belief in salvation by faith was not a mere petty intellectual assent to an idea. It was with him a believing in something all over, in such dead earnest that you are ready to give your life for it, just as you business men believe in a thing so that you are ready to risk a fortune on it. Faith is not merely saying yes when somebody announces a proposition. It is a belief that drags a whole

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train of character and consequences after it. That is Paul's belief in justification by faith.

How broad that was, and what power of freedom it had in it, was proved again in the sixteenth century. The Christian Church, under the Catholic power, had become nothing more nor less than a worse Judaism, with ritual and ceremonial,—everything except character, manliness, and force,—when Luther rose; and the weapon with which he broke the chains of modern Europe was Paul's old grand doctrine. I am not sure that we are done with that weapon yet. It does not belong by any patent right to Orthodoxy. Paul forged the weapon. Paul tried its temper and proved its power. Then, it lay rusting and waiting for a thousand years, until Luther proved strong enough to wield it, and once more to fight again the battle for human freedom. And, though it be put away in its armory, it will be called for again and again. For this doctrine means simply going right deep down to the heart of humanity, and saying that which you believe with your whole heart, and are willing to put your life into, it is that which makes you what you are.

This, then, is the service which Paul rendered to the world; and it is hints of this service which are scattered all through these Epistles, and which will make them in all coming time, whatever theory of the Bible may go up or down, of inestimable value to those who care to know the history of humanity.

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VOL. 4. MARCH 16, 1883. No. 24.

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BY

W. H. SAVAGE.

BOSTON:
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Hobbies: their Meaning and their Use.

"Be not ignorant of anything in a great matter or a small."— ECCLUS. v., 15.

ABOUT a year ago, I was turning over the leaves of the *Atlantic Monthly*, when I came upon the following paragraph from the pen of some writer to me unknown: —

Dropping into the village drug shop the other evening, I found my neighbor, the minister, playing on the violin. It was a cracked old fiddle, and his touch was none of the lightest. Even the deaf gold-fish in the aquarium dashed wildly about, enraged at the execrable noise. But I was startled at the change in the musician himself.. He is a lean, bigoted old man, who knows the Bible letter by letter; but the Bible is only a code of laws to him,— laws more inexorable than Draco's. Yet his music had transformed him: the jingling old tunes had brought a smile to his lips, a tender light to his face. He nodded, glanced cheerfully about with kindling eyes. It had made him, in short, human, which his religion had failed to do.

"I did not know that he was a musician," I said to Hurter, the druggist, when the clergyman had gone out. Hurter is a shrewd, garrulous old fellow, busy from morning until night with his gallipots and gilded jars, whose only recreation is to study the broken hints of human histories that pass before him on the other side of the counter.

"Yes, he plays," said he, leaning leisurely on the counter on his elbows. "Music is his led horse. What do I mean? Well, I was in the army, you know,— a brigadier-general of volunteers. We staff officers who could afford it all had our led horses, which we kept for an engagement or parade. We had each one steady old hack that carried us through every day's march, as a matter of course. We thought nothing of him. Our pride and affection belonged to the frisky beast we mounted but seldom, and scarcely knew how to manage. Now, my notion is this," emphasizing his point by tapping the grain weight on the scales. "Every man jogs along through life with some trade or business which carries him safely through. But, ten chances to one, he cares

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nothing for *that*. All his pride lies in some little gift or talent, which he fancies he possesses, and can use only on high, holy days. There is Boggs, the broker. Everybody knows what a dry, sapless wretch he is, when his business is money. But take him as a fisherman, and he is an incomparable good fellow, genial, enthusiastic, and hearty. He is prouder of a string of trout he has caught than of his half million of dollars; and he will give the trout away, but he never parted with a penny. Yes, take my word for it, a man is his real, best self only when he can leave his old hack, and get to caracoling on his led horse."

These reflections of the moralizing druggist struck me at first as a bit of clever sarcasm; but, chancing upon them again the other day, I fell to thinking of them in another fashion, and my meditations seemed to me not unfit for rehearsal to you.

I began to run over in my thoughts the list of men and women I had known, and I was surprised at the revelations that came to me as I remembered them.

At the head of the line there came before my eyes the figure of a Doctor of Divinity, belonging to the straitest sect of the Old School of Presbyterianism,—a Calvinist of the Calvinists. He is a tall, lean man of the most approved ministerial pattern. No one with eyes could mistake his calling on the most casual inspection. No one with ears could fail to recognize the pulpit in his sonorous commonplaces, even in a railroad car. On Sunday, he bristles with Old Testament texts, and finds in the Westminster Confession of Faith an entirely adequate solution and explanation of all the problems of the universe. The sulphurous conclusion of human history is, in his view, from his Sunday standing point, a thing assured beyond a peradventure; and he announces it in exactly the same tone of voice in which he gives notice of the church sociable to be held on the next Wednesday evening.

But take this same man and plant him opposite you at a well-spread dinner table, and observe the transformation. His leathern face is radiant with genial humor. His tongue forgets its texts, and is busy with the most jovial good fellow-

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ship. His stories keep the table in a roar, and no apprehension for the future of his boon companions interferes with his appetite or his relish for the wit of any unregenerate friend who holds the catechism in contempt.

He is on his "led horse" now. The real man and the real creed emerge from the shell of custom, and assert their real vitality and permanence. The Sunday husk lies empty behind his chair, like the cast-off mask of an actor; and you wonder how so much of hearty manhood could have lived in such a cramped disguise, and still more you wonder how he will ever get back into it in season for his next Sunday's masquerade.

By the side of this person there comes to me another,—a woman. She wears a pale, care-worn face, with traces of a former sensitive, intellectual beauty. Her eyes are weary and slow; and yet they give one the impression of clouds in which lightnings lie hid, or behind which some strange glory of dawn may wait with its divine surprise.

The lightnings, however, are what neighbors and friends forebode, for good and sufficient reasons. And, then, her tongue! Of that, I forbear to speak. No tongue but her own is adequate to the task of telling its terrible capabilities of sarcastic, blasting wit, and Satanic irony.

But find this woman in some favored home, in the centre of a circle of friends in whose company she is made to forget the common routine of her life, in a social and intellectual sympathy that awakes and sets free her better, finer self. Look at her eyes now. The dawn has come! Look at her face. You recognize a queen of heads and hearts,—one fit to rule a court, and to tell poets the meanings of their own lines, and send philosophers back to seek a deeper significance in the oracles of nature. Listen to her speech. Hear her discourse range the whole gamut of feeling,

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

Watch the winged lightning of her wit play about every theme, awaking the most sluggish minds to an unwonted

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activity, and making dunces wonder at their clearness of mental vision.

She has mounted her "led horse,"—a winged griffin, that leaps upward into the realm where she finds herself at home. She is the mate of an emperor, married to a good, stolid, bovine biped, about whose impenetrable head her wit plays like sunrise on a hillside boulder. She was made to adorn an abode of luxury, and she sees her beautiful house made the lair of a long-headed reptile, who won it from her husband with the loaded dice of a Trust Deed. She was made to find her home in the world of thought, and to sit a queen by divine right of beauty and brain; but she has been crowded into the hopeless drudgery of an existence that lacks even the companionship of a soul like-minded.

These are only two of the long line of those whose every-day faces are but masks of the real self that lives behind the common show.

You can probably summon up a similar procession of remembered forms. You know preachers whose Gospel of Despair is laid aside on Sunday night, as the farmer puts by his Sunday suit,—men whose genial humanity will have its turn, and fails not to give its contradiction to the dismal show of professional life.

And can you think of anything more pathetic than the poor old parson sawing the poor old fiddle with as little regard for its feelings as he might have felt for a heretic under similar torture? He *might* have been a *real* man, with a violin of his own, to the notes of which his children might have frolicked in his own house. But, in some evil hour, he caught the notice of his pastor, who was chairman of the school committee, and his doom was sealed. He *might* have lived in a *real* world, to do and bear his part in the stir of its affairs. But he was forced aside from the highway of humanity, and entered the vast vacuity of Theologic Fiction.

> "It is a land of shadows: yea, the land
> Itself is but a shadow, and the race
> That dwell therein are voices, forms of forms,
> And echoes of themselves."

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To the eye of one who *sees*, few things are better fitted to waken sympathy for poor humanity than are these revealings of the struggling better and nobler self, thus made the prisoner of life-long necessity. It is like a glimpse into a prison yard on some sunny eventide, when the law relaxes a little its regular severity, and the convicts come forth to sit for an hour in the sweet western light, and remember that once they were boys and girls, and hoped to find life good.

And it is just possible that our interest in what we see is made keener by the fact that we are many of us conscious that for some reason we are not living at our best. We feel with Emerson that too often "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." We are the captives of circumstance, and our ideal mocks us from an inaccessible height.

And this brings me to consider another phase of this same subject. The "led horse" of our philosophical druggist is the animal that is more generally known as the "hobby."

Men and women of vigorous and active minds and a fair share of imagination are apt to have what other people call their "hobbies." Joseph Jefferson, the inimitable "Rip Van Winkle" of the stage, loves to fancy himself a great painter, and finds more satisfaction in a fairly good picture than in a perfect piece of acting. I have heard of a famous poet whose peculiar delight is found at his work-bench with his box of tools before him. A great surgeon, whose reputation is a national affair, is prouder of the love-stories he writes for the magazines than of all his skill and learning in his special department; and a great jurist is more anxious to shine as a dancer than to win a place at the head of the awful conclave that expounds the Constitution.

These are specimens of the hobbies that are ridden, in a more or less public fashion, by people whose brilliant success in some of the great callings gives a kind of comical absurdity to their affectionate pride in these whimsies which they cherish so tenderly. But most men and women keep their love of this sort more to themselves, and make of it a

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kind of private worship on which no profane or unsympathizing eye is permitted to look. And, if we consider the meaning of these things, we shall find them quite the reverse of amusing, in the ordinary sense of the word. There may be something absurd in the figure of a learned judge who challenges us to admire a sort of dancing that can be outdone by the first professional who clicks his heels in a clog-dance to the sound of castanets. We may find the surgeon's story an infliction more painful than the surgeon's knife, and so advise him to abstain from the extra-professional cruelty of writing; but there is, after all, a side of this matter that is not by any means funny.

It is the rarest thing in the world to find a person, man or woman, great or small, who is satisfied with life's performance. The ideal is so far beyond and above the poor reality! We are lawyers, doctors, manufacturers, traders, farmers; and this is all well enough in its way. We manage to live; and, perhaps, we do something more than this. But there is an unused power, an undeveloped capacity, of which we seem to ourselves conscious. There was an artist, an orator, a statesman, a soldier, once possible, had the circumstances been propitious; but it is now too late! We muse in secret over this unfulfilled possibility: we imagine ourselves the men who "might have been," and all the present seems poor and cheap. We *might* have *lived!* As it is, we have only *existed!*

Poor, dear Oliver Goldsmith, the finest genius of his time, and one of the purest and sweetest poets of all time, could never bring himself to feel that he was engaged in anything more than a pitiful compromise with destiny. He lived and died haunted by the fancy that he ought to have been a great traveller. His eyes could never long resist the fascination that drew them to the unknown East. London was to him a prison, his pen an implement used to keep him from the hands of the bailiff. His preparation for going to the world's end was a long list of debts and one of Mr. Filby's celebrated bloom-colored suits of satin and velvet. If at any

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time he succeeded in earning or borrowing money enough to pay his way across the Channel to France, it was speedily claimed by his landlady, or given away to some hungry brother Irishman. His ambition was always subordinate to his humanity. Though he could never relinquish his wish to explore the dim mystery of Central Asia, his hand was ready with its last penny or its last crust when want came with its appeal. To the last, his spirit turned wearily and lovingly from the hard realities about him in its longing to find some fairer and nobler world. His own lines tell the story of his life: —

> "Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue
> Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;
> That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
> Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
> My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
> And find no spot of all the world my own."

Something of this same spirit is found in all the great poets. Tennyson has given us a noble picture of the old Ulysses,— the picture of a restless, heroic soul chafing within the little limits of rock-bound Ithaca. Troy has fallen, and after his long wandering he is once more at home. But rest is not what his soul craves. The world he knows is all too small for him. The unknown West invites him, and he must go. He is old, but he is unsubdued. Life will soon end, but fate shall find him with eyes that scan the yet unseen: —

> "I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> Forever and forever when I move. . . .
> For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
> And this gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

Is there not something in this that wakes response in the universal heart? In order to live truly, we must have the fence of commonplace down on one side of the world at

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least. We must have outlook through some door on the great untravelled expanses of a large existence which we make our own in fancy and into which we make excursions, now and then, mounted on our led horses of hobby. The great period of English literature was that one during which the national mind was busy with its dreams of the unexplored wonders to be found beyond the Atlantic. The great work of the individual is done while the mind is most under the inspiration of that expectancy that is provoked by the thought of life's unexhausted possibilities. "Castles in Spain" may not count for much on the tax lists, but they are often worth more to the souls of men and women than are the things that *do* count. Bismarck does not get very much of political wisdom from the novels he devours, but they help him to get into a younger, more hopeful, and larger world than the one he helps to rule. Great lawyers and physicians read love-stories and adventures, not to increase their stock of professional information, but to keep their souls from growing as musty as their libraries. If you have a hobby, take good care of it, if it is one of the sort that carries you into the larger world of what "might have been" or yet may be. The real horse you harness when your day's work is done, the musical instrument, the chest of tools, the cabinet of specimens, the favorite book, the bit of ground or the window-pot where you tend a favorite flower, the love for a solitary ramble with fishing-rod or gun,—if you have a love for any of these, do not let it die until *you* are ready to die. The work that gives you bread is important only as long as there is a man or woman whose life is worth the feeding.

There is a further suggestive aspect of the matter before us that seems not undeserving of a moment's attention.

It has often appeared to me that the old minister with his violin, taken as representative of the race, compels us to raise anew one of the great questions of civilization. He is, doubtless, an absurd figure enough, as little in keeping with our notions of the fitness of things as his music is with our notions of harmony. But it is just this absurdity that gives

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him his chief significance. This absurdity is none of his making. It is simply his protest against what he has been made to be. In him, we may see mankind entering its appeal against the hard necessity laid upon it; and we are compelled to ask, "Is it the end of God's plan to produce a comedy that turns into a tragedy all the more bitter for our brief laughter?"

A brilliant writer has recently issued a book on Political Economy, under the title *Progress and Poverty*, showing how, so far, the gains of civilization go into vast accumulations for the few. This fact is one of the startling results of modern "progress," as we call it. Is this to be the end? We cannot believe it. It is a conclusion that negatives the universal hope of man, and annihilates the ground of rational faith in God. The soul of humanity has ever been looking onward to an age when life should give scope to its longing for freer action and fuller enjoyment. Bryant, bound to the drudgery of practical life, recalls his hours spent in wandering as Nature's free-born son by the streams and amid the hills of Western Massachusetts; and his spirit rebels as he listens in the pauses of his task to the voice that calls him from the free solitudes, where the Green River sings to itself and to him: —

> "That fairy music I never hear,
> Nor gaze on those waters so green and clear,
> And mark them winding away from sight,
> Darkened with shade or flashing with light,
> While o'er them the vine to its thicket clings,
> And the zephyr stoops to freshen his wings,
> But I wish that fate had left me free
> To wander these quiet haunts with thee,
> Till the sating cares of earth should depart,
> And the peace of the scene pass into my heart;
> And I envy thy stream as it glides along
> Through its beautiful banks in a trance of song."

And

> "Though forced to drudge for the dregs of men,
> And scrawl strange words with a barbarous pen,"

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the brave and faithful man always saw his ideal of life in a condition emancipated from the tyranny of things.

And the sweet-souled traveller, surveying from his Alpine outlook the lands he had traversed, in vain seeking for some place where mankind was blest with exemption from the compulsion of hard necessity, tells his feeling in words that speak what must often be the unspoken wish of every humane spirit: —

> "And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
> Some spot to real happiness consigned,
> Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
> May gather bliss to see my fellows blest."

Now, just in proportion as my faith in God and man rise into clear and hopeful self-assertion, I see in the old parson, in Bryant, in every grave or gay rider on the led horse of some cherished hobby, a prophecy of some better day to come to mankind here in this work-day world. There *must* come a time when the toil of sustaining life will do far less than at present to make life not worth the sustaining, a time when the elemental forces shall be better instructed in their proper task of doing most of the world's work, and when the distribution of the world's supplies shall be far more equitable than at present.

And still more than this do I see. However large and full the present life shall be made in any time to come, it can only, at the most and best, make a beginning in the work of giving answer to man's longing to be what he feels himself capable of becoming. The most commonplace human being can and does construct or discover an ideal of life that would require ages for its adequate realization,—an ideal, too, that it were worth God's while to turn into reality, if it has been worth his while to make the creature who perceives and cherishes it.

And whence come this ideal and this longing to attain it? What is it in some men that discovers the poetry of the world, and what is it in other men that perceives this

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poetry when it is pointed out by genius, and can thenceforth never rest from its striving? It is "the vision and the faculty divine," say some, "looking with open eye upon the great waiting destiny of an immortal spirit. It is the God-descended soul contemplating its own immortality." Be it so. Then our poor old parson, starved on dry texts and dryer commentaries, but alive still at heart and root, and becoming human in his brief escape from the strait-jacket of creed and profession, stands to symbolize a somewhat of prime consequence to us all. That lingering, unsatisfied crying love for music is his warrant for claiming kin with God's angels. That old cracked violin is his passport to immortality.

But, say others, man has no such direct vision of immortality. This want, this dissatisfaction, arise from the remembrances of childhood. Poetry and the ideal are, in fact, the survivals of childhood gone astray in this world of plain, hard facts. If asked what it is in childhood that, living on into manhood and womanhood, gives rise to this protesting expectancy of some other and larger life, the only answer to be given is that of Wordsworth, who says that man has his original and his "home" in God, and that the child has dim remembrance of

> "That imperial palace whence he came."

Let us grant this. Our old parson is still a most significant figure, more eloquent in his grotesque poverty of being than all the regal perfection of the Apollo Belvidere. He is still able to tell, in his inarticulate fashion, his reminiscences of mighty harmonies once audible,

> "Where the bright Seraphim in burning row
> Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow."

"Nay, not so," saith our modern scientist: "man is the child of the earth and the creature of experience."

Well, let us grant this also. But here are the facts of human life, the want, the protest, the expectation.

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Here is Ulysses, his

> "Gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought."

Here is Jesus Christ, his face aglow, in the very midnight of his fortunes, with such a "light as never was on sea or land," and speaking words that traverse the ages like singing angels.

What experience of humanity has given us these, the like of these? What experience is it that in your life and in mine utters itself in hopes and wants that outgo the years of eternity? It can be nothing else than our experience of present contact with realities to us as yet invisible and inexpressible. We must be living in the presence of facts that lift us above our known and visible selves, and shape our thoughts to meanings for which the speech of earth has as yet no adequate forms of expression. These common things do not subdue our souls to the complexion of what we work in, because we are under the influence of other and higher things that keep us erect and hint to us of a larger destiny. Nothing less than this, I think, can explain such facts of human life as we see about us from day to day. Nothing less than this could it have been that first made a child of earth and time lift his face to dare the heights of eternity. Nothing less than this can it be that keeps alive in ages that drudge for mere bread to sustain a cramped and aborted life, that inherit disappointment and have only this to bequeath to the time to come,— this eternal audacity of hope. Nothing less than this can it be that causes all of you to regard the callings by which you gain money to supply your present wants as only temporary expedients in which you can never do justice to your own souls. You are conscious of other and better selves than find expression or scope in these things. You cherish the dream of what might have been, and find in the thought of it many an hour of solace from the thing that is. And in all this, that sometimes seems

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so vain, so foolish, to the "practical" moods of our worser selves, I read a most divine promise. The despised hobby shall have its day, and shall justify its keeper's love. The dumb orator shall some time speak. The skill-less artist shall dip his brush in the sunrise tints of heaven. The thwarted statesman shall help to build the divine commonwealth.

Goldsmith shall explore the wonders of a world whose horizon is infinity. The parson shall drop his bigotry and his black clothes, and have God's and man's permission to be himself.

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SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MARCH 23, 1883. No. 25.

SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

8. THE GOSPELS.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE GOSPELS.*

As we open the New Testament, we find the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, leading the list of its books. Yet, as I had occasion to tell you in my sermon on the Epistles, if we follow, as I have tried to do in a rough fashion, the chronological order, we shall place the Gospels at the end of the New Testament rather than at the beginning. It was perfectly natural and indeed inevitable, as I have already showed you, that the Gospels should have been written after the Epistles were. It could hardly have been otherwise in the state of Christian belief that existed then; for it was a part of that early belief taught, as they supposed, not only by apostle and teacher, but by the Master himself, that Jesus was very soon to return from sitting at the right hand of God in the heavens, that he was to raise the dead, that there was to be a general judgment and a miraculous ushering in of the world-wide Messianic kingdom. Of course, then, expecting him, perhaps to-night, possibly to-morrow, next week,— at the utmost, very soon,— they would feel no necessity of writing down long stories of his life or connected statements of what he had said. It was only after they had waited and were disappointed; after they had expected, and he had not come; after they had begun to look over the promises of his coming, and see if, in any way, they could explain the delay,—it was only after all this that there arose on the part of those little scattered Christian communities in the Roman Empire a feeling of the necessity for some connected and authoritative record of what the waited-for Jesus had said and done. Then, of course, it was very natural that those who had opportunity to know these

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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things should write more or less full and connected accounts of them, and that thus the Gospels should spring up.

These four Gospels, four little thin pamphlets,—for they could all be comprehended within the limits of less than a hundred pages,—are really the most significant part perhaps of all the world's literature. They tell, or claim to tell, the story of the life of that Galilean peasant who, after spending his youth in utter obscurity, flashes into the sight of his countrymen for a year, or two, or three, according as we take one account or another, then disappears by an ignominious death, and, after two or three hundred years, is exalted, in the consciousness of the civilized world, to the position of Almighty God. No rational man, then, can be indifferent to the nature and authority of these little books, when they tell us a story which has played a part in the history of the civilized world so stupendous, so unique, that it stands alone, and has no second.

What, then, is it that we desire to know concerning them? We want to know of course, first, by what authority these little pamphlets speak. Are they the word of God, infallibly, eternally true? Or are they the traditions of men, stories naturally springing up and growing through the imaginative and creative consciousness of the early Church? Who wrote them? Did Matthew and Mark and Luke and John write them, just as we have them to-day? If they did, who were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and how much are their opinions worth?

Whichever way we look at these Gospels, you see we come back to the question of the authority of these books, the power by which they speak. It is in pursuit of this that I ask you to come with me this morning, while I examine this subject. I trust you will appreciate the difficulty and magnitude of my task. It is nothing more nor less than to condense into some comprehensible shape whole libraries, and, if I may, pack them, so that my story shall have some significance and meaning, within the abbreviated limits of an hour.

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Let us then start from the stand-point of our modern world, and go up the ages, and see what we can find out about these books.

The oldest manuscript that we have of them takes us back only to the fourth century,—that is, some three hundred years after the death of him concerning whom they were written. The first question we naturally ask is, whether there is reason to suppose that we have these four little books in substantially the same shape in which they were originally written. Three hundred years had passed since the death of him of whom they are a biography, and we do not know just when they came into the precise shape in which they are to-day. The names now attached to them we do not find until nearly the last quarter of the second century,—that is, perhaps one hundred and fifty years after the death of Jesus, although the earliest forms of the Gospels may have existed long before that.

The first question, then, as I have said, is whether we have an accurate transcript of these four little books in substantially the same shape in which they were when they first took form. We are obliged to answer this question in the negative; for the different manuscripts of the Gospels which are in existence give us some hundreds, if not thousands, of various renderings. There are differences in words or in phrases, a difference of half a sentence, sometimes differences of whole paragraphs, or sometimes half a chapter, or even more than that. Then, we know that there were changes through the carelessness of transcribers. There were changes from dogmatic reasons, in order that the person copying or using them might make them teach what they held to be true. In this way, changes of greater or less magnitude were made. Sometimes, they were the result of intentional fraud. Let me give you the authority of Origen, one of the most famous and learned of all the church Fathers. It was some time after the New Testament books were written before they took on the character of sacred writings, when a man would not have been regarded

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as sacrilegious for taking from or adding to them. They were considered as the work of ordinary men, and not too sacred to be touched or changed as yet. But, whatever may have been thought of the books of the New Testament in the early Church, the entire Church at the time professed to regard with almost superstitious sacredness the books of the Old Testament. That was the Scripture before the New Testament became Scripture. Yet we have the authority of Origen, writing in the fourth century, for the statement that, in the heated and angry controversies of that period, people did not scruple to change even the text of the Old Testament for their own purposes. Concerning the Septuagint, he says: "There are evidently great discrepancies in the copies of the Septuagint, whether attributable to the carelessness of scribes or to the rash and pernicious alteration of the text by some and the unauthorized interpolations and omissions of others." Origen writes in that way about the manner in which the early Church dared to treat even the Old Testament Scriptures; so you can imagine with what freedom they would handle the less sacred and newer books that afterward came to be the New Testament.

We know, then, that there were great changes made. These books floated around in the churches, and passed through some of the most biting, bitter, and burning controversies that the religious world has ever seen. They hurled texts on both sides with as much vigor as has been done in the modern world. When you remember that there were only manuscripts, that there were no printed books, no standards of authority or appeal, you can see how easy it might be for a man to make a change in his own copy, and then claim that that was the original. Another man having a copy that did not agree with it would claim that his was the original, and the one who claimed the loudest would be likely to carry the day.

Another point. Were there more than four Gospels, and, if so, how does it happen that we have only four to-day?

There were a great many Gospels written in the early

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Church. I have here in my hand, for example, a copy of the apocryphal New Testament. It is almost as large as the genuine one. This book is made up of Gospels, visions, and allegories, which were rejected by the orthodox of the Church as time went on. It contains at the beginning four Gospels, the Gospel of Mary, the Protevangelion, the Gospel of the Infancy, the Gospel of Nicodemus. I also hold in my hand the book of an eminent High Churchman of England, entitled *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, which gives an account of ten which were known to the early Church, a part on one side of the great controversy, and a part on the other. I had occasion, in a previous sermon, as you will remember, to refer to the great controversy in the early Church between Paul, who was in favor of admitting the Gentiles, and the other section, headed by Peter and James, who believed that no Gentiles should come in, or only by practically becoming Jews. This controversy raged for a long period of years; and we find, as a record of it, certain Gospels called the Petrine Gospels, representing the Hebraic side, and another set called the Pauline Gospels, which take Paul's side of the controversy. They went to the extent of changing the records of the Gospels themselves, coloring them to suit one faction or another of this great party controversy. These Gospels, many of them, were written or changed, as it was supposed, in the interest of heretical sects, though it is quite a question whether those that came to be called heretical were not originally the orthodox ones who changed to heretics by being left behind; for Orthodoxy changed, as it has been changing ever since, and that which represented the older ideas became the heresies left behind.

Along toward the latter part of the second century, we find that the sifting process has gone on, and the Church has come to a general consensus of opinion as to which Gospels should be accepted as genuine; and those were the four that we have in our hands to-day.

We can reconstruct some of those lost and hostile epistles;

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that is, we can tell almost the whole story of the life of Jesus as told there, through picking up the quotations made here and there in the controversial writings of the day. Take, for example, the Gospel of Marcion, one of the leading heretics of the time. He had a Gospel which he claimed to be older than any we possess, and which I am inclined to think was so. This represented Jesus as human, and took the Hebraic side of the controversy. Marcion, being one of the great leaders of heresy, was quoted by all the principal writers of the time. They quoted his Gospel here and there and everywhere to such an extent that we can, in the literature of the early Church, pick out nearly the whole of it, and put it together like a piece of mosaic work. As letting you into the secret of the state of mind of one of those early Fathers that we are accustomed to look upon with such exaggerated reverence, let me give a specimen of their opinions. After the Gospel of John had been written and become popular, and the four Gospels had been decided on, Irenæus, writing about 185 A.D., gives his reason why, in his opinion, there are these four Gospels and no more; and it is a most astonishing reason. He does not say there are four Gospels because there were only four writers who told the truth, because there were only four who wrote with authority, that there were only four who were inspired to do this kind of work. He does not say anything about that. What does he say? "It is impossible that the Gospels can be more or less than they are. For, as there are four zones in the world which we inhabit, and four principal winds, while the Church is spread abroad throughout the earth, and the pillar and basis of the Church is the gospel and the spirit of life, it is right that she should have four pillars, exhaling immortality on every side, and bestowing renewed vitality on men. From which fact, it follows that the Word has given us four versions of the gospel united by one spirit."

I want you now to consider with me a little the traces of growth which have taken place in these four Gospels. If you look at them carefully, you will have to divide them into

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two parts; the first part containing the first three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the second part John, by itself. The first three have been called the Synoptic Gospels, from two Greek words meaning taking a common view, or seeing together. They give in general the same view of Jesus, different from that of John.

Look at the first three, and you will see some of the evidences lying on the surface which prove to us that we do not have the record as it could have been written in the time or near the time of Jesus. Of course, I shall not be able to go into very minute points of criticism. I shall only give you specimens of what might be multiplied indefinitely.

Take the genealogies first. Matthew has a genealogy, and Luke has one; yet they both tell the story of the miraculous conception. They both tell us that Jesus was the son of Mary without any human father. Yet they take the pains to give us at length the genealogy of Joseph, as though that had anything to do with it. Unless Jesus was the son of Joseph, giving his genealogy does not prove that he was the son of David or of Abraham, any more than it proves that I am. Of course, it has nothing whatever to do with it. Take one or two other little hints akin to this. Jesus is represented when a mere boy as betraying remarkable precocity in the journey made to Jerusalem. Yet we find his mother, who ought to have known whether he was the son of the Holy Spirit, utterly astonished at this evidence of precocity. We find his brothers charging him with being possessed with the devil, and having no sort of faith in him. We find his townsmen laughing at him, ridiculing his pretensions. Could it be possible that they had had the slightest hint that this was the son of the Most High God,— not only that, but very God himself? If so, ought they to have been very much astonished at any proof of wisdom he might display in his early childhood or in any part of his career? Ought his mother to have been astonished that he should feel that he had a career before him, and that he did not ask parental guidance or permission concerning it?

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Another point. We find in the Gospels as we have them now a phrase in which Jesus is represented as giving his disciples the following command: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Turn to Paul's Epistles. We find him talked about, charged with baptizing disciples into his own name. Would it have been possible for him or for any of the disciples to have baptized in the name of Paul, when they had been commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? We know perfectly well from the development of doctrine that, until the second or third centuries, the doctrine of the Trinity was not held at all. So that the fact that this phrase is lying there on the surface of the gospel proves beyond question that it belongs to a later age, and must have been placed there after the doctrine that it represents had grown into the consciousness and belief of the early Church.

Take another point. Jesus is represented, the very last thing before he left the earth, as commanding his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"; yet he has not been dead ten years before the Church is rent into factions wrangling over the question whether they shall allow any Gentile to hear preaching or not, whether they shall admit a Gentile, even if he wants to come. Is it possible that Jesus could have uttered those words, and all the apostles have forgotten them so quickly? Think what a weapon they would have been to Paul! What if he could have said to Peter and James, Do you not remember that the very last thing the Master said before leaving the earth was that we were to preach the gospel to every creature! But neither Paul refers to it in controversy, nor does James nor Peter. The inference is irresistible that the words were placed there in a later age, after the Pauline faction had won the day; and, then, Jesus is represented as indorsing that which was an accomplished fact.

In the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, Jesus is represented as telling how to deal with those who should become hereti-

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cal or offenders in the Church. There was not any church in existence until long after he died. It was absurd to suppose he was talking about church regulations before the Church existed. Then, the spirit of the directions is utterly foreign to the Master. He was always exceedingly tender to publicans and sinners and outcasts. But, here, Jesus is made to say of such an offending disciple: "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Can you conceive those words in the mouth of the tender, forgiving, human Son of Man?

Take one more point. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus is represented as sitting on the throne of judgment, and before him are gathered all the nations of the earth; and he is giving, as Almighty God, the conditions of eternal salvation. What are they? Simply, moral goodness,—healing the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, looking after the lowest outcast. These are the conditions. If there were any other conditions, can you conceive him who had come on purpose to save men as forgetting all about them? What is to become then of all that shall die between the time he utters those words and the time that Almighty God shall correct his statement, and give a true version of the conditions of eternal life? Yet, in the last chapter of the Gospel of Mark, we find the same Jesus represented as sending his disciples into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. And what are the conditions of salvation that are here given? "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Not a word about goodness or morality. Instead of its being the Son of Man who utters these last words, I am compelled to imagine in his place a robed and self-sufficient bishop of the Church, domineering and dictatorial toward those who dared to question his words.

These three Gospels represent three traditions in part; and, in part, they represent one common tradition concern-

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ing the life and teaching of Jesus. I want to hint a word about that which would take me a long time to develop with fulness and clearness, so that you may see by what process we get back through the maze of the improbable and the miraculous, until we find ourselves in the presence of the simple Son of Man.

Each writer gives the story of his life. You will find it not only a common story, but the same words, the same phrases are perpetually recurring in each of these three different Gospels. It is settled beyond question, I think, as a principle of criticism that these three writers used some common materials; that is, Mark did not borrow from Matthew, nor Luke from either, but all three used a common fund of tradition. We find traces in the traditions of the times of *logia*, little fragmentary writings. Some one had gathered the sayings of Jesus, another had written a partial account of what he did, and so there grew up this common fund of tradition concerning him. And, when these Gospels were written, they used this common story, making such additions as they thought best. If we take out that which is common to them all, if we take out the story in which they all agree, and leave out that which is added, we come to that to which scholars have given the name of the triple tradition. Suppose we take three Lives of Lincoln or Washington, distinct in many points, and yet agreeing in many, we should feel more certain of those things which were told by all three than of what was told by any one alone. Precisely the same is true here. If we extract the story from these three Gospels, we can make out a complete history of Jesus of Nazareth, and use only the very words which are common to all three of these different writers.

If we make such a story as that, what kind of a man do we find? The supernatural birth is lost at once, so also the story of the supernatural resurrection and ascension into heaven. Nearly all the more stupendous and incredible miracles are gone; and we stand in the presence of a simple, loving, tender, heroic, devoted man,—a man about whom

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wonder stories are beginning to gather, and they seem so simple and so natural that we can almost see the materials out of which they have sprung. This is the process that criticism is going through with to-day, just as it seeks to find the origin of any wonderful story that it believes to have had an historic basis.

I have said John stands apart. The other three Gospels were growths. Neither Matthew nor Mark nor Luke wrote them. Those names as attached to them were purely traditional, but without one particle of authority. We do not find those names until nearly two hundred years have gone by.

It is a recognized fact by all the best orthodox criticism of to-day, as represented by Prof. Robertson Smith in the Encyclopædia Britannica, and by Dr. Abbott of the English Church in the same, that these Gospels are unapostolic digests of early traditions. That is, some one has edited and gathered into the shape in which we have them materials a good deal older than they. The Gospel of John, however, stands alone. Here, Jesus is not a simple man. It is announced in the very outset that it is not a simple man of whom he writes. John's Gospel is a theological treatise. He starts out with a thesis which he is going to prove, and he selects from the materials here and there that which shall serve his purpose; and, when he is done, we recognize hardly a single lineament of the simple son of Joseph and Mary of the first three Gospels, and we find in his place a grand, pre-existent, spiritual, metaphysical abstraction; for the Jesus of John is not a man. He could by no possibility have been the same person about whom Matthew, Mark, and Luke are writing. By the time John wrote, the doctrine had developed of his being the pre-existent Christ, partaking of the nature of God. He says nothing about any human origin or birth, but begins with him in the heavens, before he descends to earth. Then, after a brief phenomenal appearance here, he disappears into the clouds again.

Let us note two or three points of difference between this conception and the others. According to the first three

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Gospels, the public life of Jesus is given as about a year and a half; and he makes one journey to Jerusalem, spending most of his life in Galilee.

John, on the other hand, appears to give his public life as continuing three years. He makes three journeys to Jerusalem, and spends the greater part of his life in Judea. Both cannot be true. See how different are the whole circumstances, the whole atmosphere, and the kind of man. The writer of John evidently lived out of Judea. He lived after the destruction of Jerusalem. He makes all kinds of mistakes in geography. He does not locate the towns correctly, nor under the right names. John was intensely Jewish in belief and sympathy, and yet the writer of this Gospel speaks of the Jews as though they were a foreign people. He even speaks to the Jews of things in their law as what is written "in your law." Suppose I, a citizen of Massachusetts, should stand here and talk about one of the common statutes under which we all live as of "your law." If I came from Ohio, it would be appropriate enough; but, if I lived in Massachusetts, it would be absurd. Or, as if I were writing a book, and should speak about Americans as though I were an Englishman or a Frenchman. John is speaking all the time of what the Jews did and said, reflecting the time when the Christians began to look on the Jews as natural enemies, and the persons who had crucified their Lord. Let me read a sentence here from Dr. Martineau, one of the leading Unitarians of the world: —

> That a constant companion of the ministry of Jesus should shift it almost wholly to *a new theatre*, should never come across a *demoniac*, and never tell a *parable;* should remember nothing about the *Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Coming of the Son of Man;* should have forgotten the *last Passover* of the little flock, with its institution of the *Communion*, and have occupied those festival hours with the Crucifixion instead; should have lost the Master's *terse maxims* and sweet images of life, thrown out in homely dialogue, and have fancied in their place elaborate monologues, darkened with harsh and mystic paradox,—is so utterly against nature as to forfeit the rank of an admissible hypothesis.

That is, Dr. Martineau thinks it absurd that John could

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have been the author of this Gospel. Jesus does not utter any parables in this Gospel. He tells them not to make long prayers, and yet he prays through whole chapters. He who was tender and loving toward the past, and who counted himself as a prophet like those of old, and who accepted his mission as prophesied and foretold, is made to say that all who came before him were thieves and robbers. The Jesus of John's Gospel is metaphysical, unlovable, hardly human, utterly unlike the simple man of Nazareth of the first three.

Now, I must tell you how it came that such a Gospel as this should have been written, and under what bias it was composed.

I have referred before to the philosophy and the sect of the Gnostics. They grew up in this way. When the Septuagint translation of the Bible was made, there started up in Alexandria a great school of philosophy, the avowed purpose of which, in part, was to reconcile the religion of the Jews and the philosophy of Greece; and, from that day on, this mixture of Old Testament religion and Grecian philosophy went on, fermenting and changing according to the popular taste and speculations of the time, until, along in the second and third centuries, we find ourselves face to face with this great system of Gnosticism. What was the central point of their belief? They believed that matter was essentially evil and the source of evil; that God was the ineffable, the infinite, the unseen, who dwelt remote from all possible contact with the visible world. Yet, in some way, he was the source of all life and all things. They had, therefore, to bridge over this almost infinite gulf between God and the world by conceiving or speculating on what they called *æons*, or emanations.

That is, in some inexplicable, mysterious way, a god a little lower than the Infinite One emanates from him, constituting a god of the second class, and then from this god of the second class emanates a third, and so on till, to make up the complete chain, there are about thirty different *æons* or emanations. The last and lowest of the whole range was the

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one who created the world. They identified him with the Jehovah of the Old Testament. When they began to speculate about the nature of Jesus, they conceived that, in some marvellous, mysterious way, he summed up all this chain of *æons*, or emanations, so that John tells us that in him dwelt all the fulness of the godhead bodily. You find in him the whole *pleroma*, the technical term by which they designated this whole range of *æons* that linked the Infinite God to the world. It was a wild region of speculation. They did not have one single fact to go on, and it did not seem to occur to any one of them that they needed a fact. It was one wild chaos of speculation, in which the simplest and mildest virtues became endowed with personality.

The opening of John's Gospel seems very simple in English,— all this about life and light and truth. But, when we look at it carefully, we find that these were sub-gods, deities, spelled with a capital letter, personified; and Jesus sums them all up in himself, and becomes the link to bind God and the world together. Under the influences of this philosophy, John's Gospel was written. It was a reconciling book between the divisions in the Church, between the Gnostics and the other believers. When one who understands Gnosticism looks at it, he sees it all covered with the finger-marks of that system, as modern literature is covered over with the finger-marks of evolution or Darwinism. It could not have been written till Gnosticism was in the air, any more than Darwinism could exist till Darwin had lived.

In what position do we stand concerning the life and words of Jesus? Have we a record of them that is perfect, complete, authoritative?

No, we must confess that we have not, so far, as we can be certain, the testimony of a single eye-witness of anything he ever did. Paul is our oldest witness, and he never saw Jesus. We have not the authoritative record of a word he ever uttered. Yet do not misunderstand me, or think I go too far. I do not doubt in the least that we have substantially a true account of the sayings of Jesus. There are a good many

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things recorded that I believe he did not say, and of course he said a thousand things which are not there. But the words of Jesus were of such a nature that they were not easily to be forgotten. We may safely trust them to tradition, and expect them to be reported with a great deal of accuracy; and we may believe that we have them substantially as he uttered them.

As we slough off the accretions and later growths of miracle and marvel, what kind of a man do we see Jesus must have been? Simply, a tender, gentle, true, God-conscious man, sympathetic toward all men, a hero, a martyr, a man who shared the doubts and errors of his age,—which is only saying that he was human,—and yet rising above it like the Andes above a plain. He was grand in his heroism, simple and true when standing for his convictions in the face of the Roman governor and the howling mob; thoughtful and tender to the last, yet going unflinchingly to feel the nails driven through the quivering flesh that fastened him to the cross; a man, combining manhood's strongest strength and womanhood's tenderest grace; a man to be loved, to be honored, to be everything except worshipped. A man whose name we may be proud to wear, if we do not change it until it has a meaning that he would not have recognized.

When we come to speak of the miracles, there is no intelligent jury in Boston could ever be induced to commit a man to prison for thirty days for the crime of larceny, unless they had stronger evidence for it than we have of any New Testament miracle. We have stronger evidence for miracles performed in the time of Saint Augustine, in the time of Thomas à Becket, for those in Lourdes last year, than we have of the New Testament miracles. Yet we let them pass by us as the idle winds which we make no account of. Shall we then believe these because they are old, because they are anonymous, because we cannot put the witnesses on the stand and cross-question them, because we do not know who they were or when or where they lived. But, even if we had proof of such things, what then? It seems

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strange to me that people should make so much of the question whether John wrote the Gospel bearing his name or not. If he did, it is purely a literary question. If I knew that John, who leaned on the bosom of Jesus, wrote the Gospel, and therein declared that he was a supernatural being, why should I believe it? Suppose that Mr. Herndon, after an intimate association of years with Lincoln, should tell me that it was his private conviction that Abraham Lincoln was a supernatural being: should I believe it? It would be only his opinion, and we must have something more than a simple opinion of any man before we can accept the stupendous statement that three in heaven are different from three on earth, and that a fallible, weak, suffering, dying man is at the same moment the eternal and infinite God of all the worlds.

But, after these are all gone by, we have in this New Testament the record of a life whose influences cannot die,—one which, so far as it has had opportunity to make its own simple way and tell its own simple story, has been sweetening, brightening, helpful, uplifting,—and divine.

Father, to Thee we offer our worship, and we dare offer it to none besides Thee. Thou art our God and our Father. We ask Thee for Thy light and Thy truth, that we may be faithful and true as was Thy Son in Galilee two thousand years ago; and thus, by being like him, we shall honor him; and, in so far as he was like Thee, may we be like Thee also. Amen.

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LIFE'S WONDER

Read before the sermon, as part of the Scripture Lesson.

'Tis "vanity of vanities": thus said
The Preacher, in the ages long since dead.

And "vanity of vanities," the cry
Rings on the air of every century.

The worldling, pleasure-worn, toil-wearied, asks,
"Is life worth living," with its weary tasks?

Religion, with her faithless moan, appears,
And says, The world is but "a vale of tears."

"O fools and blind!" the wonder feast to spite,
Whose own wild folly's dulled your appetite!

A blind man through a wondrous picture hall
Went muttering about each "empty wall."

A deaf man, when a symphony was sung,
Much marvelled at each mute and voiceless tongue.

And one, whose sense of smell was lost, deplored
Their folly who the odorous rose adored.

And one, heart-shrivelled by his heartless loves,
Mocked at young lovers and at cooing doves.

And one, who talked of solid facts, oft smiled
At those by poetry and art beguiled.

"O fools and blind!" The farmer wonders why
The scholar studies, with admiring eye,

The tiny scratches on the boulder's top,
Whose huge obstruction only hurts his crop.

Meanwhile, the scholar in the boulder sees
The wondrous story of lost centuries.

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The stolid Arab, under desert skies,
Sees where afar the Pyramids arise;

But, on their rocky, weathen-beaten page,
Reads not the strange tale of a buried age.

The peasant by the Swiss lakes sees not there
The pile-raised village lift itself in air.

And bones and arrow-heads are rubbish all
To him who hears no far-off ages call,

From out the silence of the past, to say,
"We were the fathers of your glad to-day."

Oh, wonder of the world, whose surface bright
Fills wide-eyed childhood with a fresh delight!

Beneath the surface, to exploring eyes,
Deep yawns to deep, and heights on heights arise.

Each grass-blade and each gaseous atom holds
An infinite mystery, that his thought unfolds

Who knows each molecule the kinsman is
Of every star-ray piercing the abyss.

And not one lowly blossom in the vale
But to the instructed ear can tell a tale,

Whose opening chapter was the eternal past,
And is not done while endless ages last.

Short is his fathom-line who thinks he sounds —
And finds it shallow — being's dread profounds.

The emptiness is in the pool that lies
Too shoal to hold the stars and boundless skies.

Oh, when I look upon the laughing face
Of children, or on woman's gentle grace;

Or when I grasp a true friend by the hand,
And feel a bond I partly understand;

When mountains thrill me, or when by the sea
The plaintive waves rehearse their mystery;

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Or when I watch the moon with strange delight,
Treading her pathway 'mid the stars at night;

Or when the one I love, with kisses prest,
I clasp with bliss unspoken to my breast,—

So strange, so deep, so wondrous life appears,
I have no words, but only happy tears!

I cannot think it all shall end in naught;
That the abyss shall be the grave of thought;

That e'er oblivion's shoreless sea shall roll
O'er love and wonder and the lifeless soul.

But, e'en though this the end, I cannot say
I'm sorry that I saw the light of day.

So wondrous seems this life I live to me,
Whate'er the end, *to-day I hear and see!*

To-day I think and hope! and so for this—
If it must be—for just so much of bliss,—

Bliss threaded through with pain,—I bless the Power
That holds me up to gaze one wondrous hour!

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IS THE UNIVERSE GOOD?

If any one of us were commissioned to make a new world, it is safe to assume that we should get out a good many patents for proposed improvements on the present one. We would have one in which we should never fail of getting the things we should desire. The winds should always blow in the direction in which we were sailing; the trains on which we would ride should never be behind time; storms should never interfere with our excursions; and whatever pet schemes we planted should always come up, blossom, and bear fruit. We would leave moral evil out of the plan. No one should ever weep as the victim of a wrong. No vice should blotch the face of the fair world's beauty: no trembling victims should crouch and cower beneath the threatening shadow of a crime. There should be no more pain. As Colonel Ingersoll suggests, we would have "good health catching instead of disease." The pinched lips of famine should glow red with well-fed blood; and the roadway of the nerves, now trod so often by the red-hot feet of pain, should only thrill beneath the joyous steps of pleasure. And death should be a thing of which no agonized heart had ever heard, and for which human speech should have no name.

In short, the world, as it exists, does not meet with our approval; and, against either the wisdom or the goodness of its ordering, we feel that we have many serious charges to bring. These charges may take only the form of bitter tears over life's sorrows and disappointments; they may be but the dumb protests of a discontented heart; they may voice themselves in serious questionings of a soul anxious to find grounds for its faith; or they may turn to downright un-

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belief, and with Schopenhauer declare the world to be utterly bad, an unfortunate blunder, or something worse,—a crime.

Mr. John Stuart Mill, for example, tells us that, if we judge by the facts of the world and of human life, we have no right to believe in a perfect God. Either he is not wise enough to do always the best, or he is not strong enough to carry out his perfect will; or else he is not perfectly good, and so does not wish to make everything for the best. Professor Felix Adler some time ago took a similar position. And Colonel Ingersoll—one of the most sensitive and tender-hearted men I ever knew—has made the whole country familiar with the similar position which he holds. Judging by his own fatherhood, he cannot imagine a loving "Father in heaven" letting the world go on as it does, while he sits quiet above the serene, blue skies.

And, indeed, the indictments that such men bring against the goodness of the world are most serious. They tell us how careless the universe seems of suffering. All the way up, from the lowest forms of life to man, everything is pursued and preyed upon by something else. As Mr. Ingersoll phrases it, "every tooth on earth is a tombstone, and every stomach a sepulchre,"—life everywhere pursued by other life, and in turn devouring and being devoured. Or, as Tennyson sadly sings it,—

> "Nature, red in tooth and claw with ravin, shrieks against the creed"

of faith in the universal goodness. Nature everywhere is apparently reckless of life; so that, after a brief glimpse of light and one thrilling sip of pleasure, the seeing eye and the feeling nerve appear to find a common catastrophe in the dust. And even on the too brief journey, instead of mutual kindliness and sympathy and help, it is too often a scene of injustice and cruelty; tears of the weak not wiped away, but only caused by the strong.

When the world was orthodox, it thought it had a satisfactory explanation of the difficulty. It referred all to the

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unfortunate slip of our first parents and their fall in Eden. Sorrow and sin and death were "the fruit of that forbidden tree." It was all their fault; and we all were justly implicated in their punishment. But, since we have learned that there never was any fall, and that pain and death were on the earth long ages before the mythical Eve and her serpent ever visited the troubled dreams of man, we can no longer regard this as a solution of our problem. And since with a higher civilization has come a higher thought of divine justice and divine responsibility, we could not accept it any way, even had it not been disproved as a fact. For, instead of its solving our present difficulty, it would itself be a greater difficulty still. Were there in the universe a god capable of planning the cruel and unjust scheme of the world, as Orthodoxy teaches it, instead of our asking his forgiveness, it is only simple justice to say that he ought to ask ours.

We must then look at the problem of evil afresh, and see if we can find another answer. I dare not hope that I shall satisfy all your many questionings, even if I can satisfy my own. But, if I can do no more than find logical standing ground for rational trust and hope, that will be much. Perhaps that is all we need. At any rate, if we can find that, we can then patiently wait and do our work well, and trust for some clearer word to fall from the now sealed lips of the future.

Is the universe, on the whole and in the long run, good? That is our question. One of Tennyson's "Two Voices" asks,—

> "Life is so full of misery,
> Were it not better not to be?"

There is the division line: on which side shall we stand?

Before we decide that question, we must ask and answer another. What is "good"? By what test shall we decide whether there is more of it in the world than of its opposite? We need to settle this first, so that we shall clearly know just what it is that we are talking about. There may be

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a good deal in my life that I would not care to keep; and yet I may not be ready to throw away the whole for the sake of getting rid of the undesirable part. All "pay-rock" is mixed with much alloy of worthless stuff, and yet the miner tries to get out the gold and let the rest of it go. A man may find a balance of satisfaction in life, and yet be weighted down with a thousand burdens.

My test of good is this, and I am willing to abide by it as the basis of a decision: *that life is good in which the satisfactions outweigh their opposites.* This is in essence "the happiness theory" of good and evil. It is the one I hold. And yet, if you will think a little, you will see that it is not that vulgar thing which many, who ought to know better, are accustomed to set forth when they wish to ridicule this theory. A martyr may find more satisfaction — that is, happiness — in his sufferings for truth than a *roué* finds in his wine and wassail. Whether the source of his satisfaction be in art or science, or nature or work, or friendship or love, in labor for wife or child, or service of country or philanthropic reform, or whether it be only the grand consciousness of having done his best and continuing noble in failure,—if, in any way, a man gains more of satisfaction than of the opposite out of life, I should count that life a good. May we then believe that, judged by this test, good preponderates over evil? And may we believe that the sum of good is gradually increasing in the world?

I may choose now any one of several different methods for bringing this question to a practical decision. Out of the many possible methods, then, I am going to take the following. I will consider in their order four great typical objections to the goodness of the universe, and see if they are conclusive. Of course, each one of them can be only touched on briefly, along with the hint of an answer; for each one is large enough for a treatise by itself. But I hope I may be able to put my points in such a way that you can think them out for yourselves.

1. I suppose that every human life, in the consciousness

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of him or her who lives it, is more or less of a failure. No man rounds out his ideal. He carries ever in his breast a painful sense of incompleteness, of falling short. The things he does are dwarfed in the presence of his dreams of the things he meant to do. Probably, the only exceptions to this are in the two following cases. First, there is the man of gigantic self-conceit. Everything he has and everything he does is "splendid." Everybody else knows he is a fool; but he is so big a fool that he is not conscious of it, and so he goes smilingly on his way. Such a man does not count in our argument; for, I take it, none of us would like to change places with him, even for the sake of his self-satisfied smile. The other exception is the man who suffers from no sense of failure, because he is too dull-witted and commonplace to cherish any high ideal or attempt to do anything noble.

We may leave them one side then, and say that all sensible men feel the incompleteness and failure of their life. Now, then,—and this is our point,—does this prove that the plan of human life on earth is a poor one? Because we cannot get all we wish, or do all we wish, does it follow that life itself is a failure?

I am convinced that our complaints against human destiny on this score spring out of a misconception as to what that thing is, in life, out of which we get our noblest satisfactions. Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." He might well have added, Neither does it consist in the things which he has done, and which are thus behind him as accomplished facts. Life's satisfactions are not in things obtained or in things done, but rather in the processes of getting and doing. All pleasure, in other words, is in the active exercise of function, not in the things accomplished after the function has ceased.

To take two or three simple and concrete illustrations: A hungry man enjoys eating, not the fact that he has eaten, after the dinner is over. A business man enjoys making money

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a good deal more than he does spending it or the fact that he has it. A boy enjoys playing. He does not sit down at night, after he is tired, and enjoy the fact that he has played. He rather begins to anticipate what he is going to do tomorrow. The fabled story of Alexander tells it all. He enjoyed conquering the world; but, when it was done, he could think of no other pleasure than finding another one to conquer. The thrill of joy, the intoxication of pleasure, is always in the search, the doing, not in the past achievement.

And, as in the lower, so also in the higher ranges of life. Lessing put the truth finely, when he said that, if God gave him the choice of grasping the perfect truth or of having the privilege of seeking for it, he would choose the search, and leave the secret to be discovered. A truth found is a squeezed orange; and man always reaches out his hand toward the bough for fruit still unplucked.

This, then, wherein life's satisfactions really lie, is ours. We foolishly dream of getting through and resting. But endless rest would only be endless ennui. If I had to listen to the endless harping of the old-time heaven, I can only picture myself as covering my face with my wing, and doing my best to stifle an everlasting yawn. We long for a restful night, but we want that followed by an eager morning. The man who has got through and is satisfied can only be the one who is satisfied with a very little. If he has attained his ideal, it can only be because it is pretty poor and mean.

Life's incompleteness and dissatisfactions, then, only mean an unexhausted capacity, and the promise of grander things still unattained. The only thing in this universe that is satisfied to keep still is that which is worn out and dead. All live things feel the contagion of the infinite life.

2. The next great charge against the universe is the existence of moral evil. Either God wanted it, and so it is a part of the plan of things; or, not wanting the thing itself, he permitted it for the sake of a greater good; or, not wanting it, it came in spite of him, and so he must be thought of as

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weak. In any case, if he is the infinite God, the responsibility for the thing itself and for all its results must ultimately rest on him.

But whether it is an insuperable difficulty or not depends upon how we regard it, and what its outcome is to be. If it means endless evil and sorrow to a part of the human race, we cannot justify it. It is a flat denial of the perfect goodness of God; and all the attempts of the Church to reconcile it with God's goodness are shuffling with words or a shutting of the eyes to facts. But, if it is only a part of the process of human development, it may be no real difficulty at all.

I fully believe that this latter is the truth about it. If a race of beings could live always on one level; if they made no progress, and were incapable of making any,—in such a case, they could have no consciousness of sin. A painter is ashamed of work, when he knows he can do better. Otherwise, there is no unattained ideal to mock his poor performance. So, when one has been less of a man than he knows he can be, his moral ideal condemns the sordid reality of his life. And if, by being less of a man, he has also injured others, his remorse deepens: he calls himself before the bar of his own better self, and issues a verdict of self-contempt.

But all this only means, "I have been lower than I am to-day; and there, before and above me, rise the heights of nobler possibility that I can, and so ought to, climb."

Moral evil, then, may well be interpreted as the necessary stages of all moral growth. We do not condemn as evil in the animal world certain courses of conduct that we speak of as "brutal" in men. And, in the lower ranges of human life, many things were good that have become evil, because they are unsuited to the kind of being that the higher man has come to be. And much that we now permit and approve our nobler descendants will undoubtedly condemn.

Moral evil, then, may mean only a growing humanity. He who finds nothing in his yesterday to condemn only reveals the fact that he has taken no new step forward to-day.

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3. Perhaps the commonest indictment brought against the goodness of the universe is the universal fact of pain. If people formulated their thought and put it into words, it would often find utterance in saying: "If there were a good Father in heaven, he would not make me suffer so. I could not treat one of my children thus!" Well, let us face the facts, blinking nothing, and try what we can see. Tennyson voices his trust,—

> "That not a worm is cloven in vain;
> That not a moth with vain desire
> Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire."

If this trust be not well founded, then the goodness of the universe is impeached. If there is any wanton, useless, even careless pain, then it cannot be our ideal of a loving Father in heaven that rules the universe.

That, while trying to be brief, I may also be clear, I will here mark off a few points as sharply as I can.

(1) I believe we greatly exaggerate the total amount of the world's suffering. For instance, we imagine the lower orders of creatures as having nervous systems capable of pain as keen and of as many kinds as our own; which is not true.

Then, the fear from which they suffer seems to be only the working of a necessary instinct to guard them against danger.

And, if they are to die at all, it is probable that they suffer less through the present process of mutual destruction than they would if left to linger and die what is falsely called a "natural" death. In reality, one is just as "natural" as the other.

That death should exist at all, I will touch on soon.

(2) I believe we greatly exaggerate the relative amount of suffering among the lower races, among those whose lives seem commonplace and poor, and in the average run of our own daily lives.

Barbaric life seems very repulsive to us; and, were we

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thrust down to its lower level to-day, carrying with us our present feelings and desires, it would simply be unbearable. But it is not so to them. I should not like being turned into an oyster; and yet, I doubt not, the oyster has a very enjoyable time of it, for an oyster. And the same is true of an Eskimo or a Sioux Indian.

And, among the poor and those who seem to lack all that makes life mean so much to the rich and cultured, I very much question whether the difference is so great as it seems. The poor man who is getting ahead a little may be a good deal happier than the rich one who is going behind a little.

And, in the case of all of us, a thousand sunny days of comfort go by as a thing of course, unnoticed and uncounted; while we dwell on the few days of sorrow, until, like little clouds, they overspread the sky and shut out all the light.

(3) Then, again, a careful observation of human life compels us to believe that some of the fairest and noblest results of character, some of life's sweetest satisfactions, are wrought out through long experiences of pain.

(4) But the one conclusive consideration to my mind is this, and it alone is enough to settle the matter for me: the experience of pain seems to me to be absolutely necessary to the experience of joy. All consciousness of anything comes only through contrast. I should not know light, if there were no shadow. Heat has a meaning only in contrast with cold. Beauty is seen only as it is set over against deformity. If all the world were of one color, it would be no color, and we should be as if blind. An organ incapable of a discord can produce no music. Indeed, music has a meaning only as distinguished from discord. A nerve that cannot tingle with pain could never thrill with pleasure. To say conscious life, then, is to give utterance to the possibility of pain. I do not believe any world will ever set us perfectly free from it. Perpetual bliss is only the dream of people who are weary of too much sorrow. It would only mean perpetual monotony; that is, perpetual vacuity and nothingness. The joy of achievement can only mean the possibility of failure and the overcoming of obstacles.

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I do not believe that pain is in itself a real evil. It is evil only as it is useless.

4. There is one point more for me to touch upon. Is death a contradiction of the goodness of the universe? Only hints are possible now by way of reply. Several considerations are worth glancing at:—

(1) Judging by all we know of life here on earth, we are compelled to believe that, when prolonged much beyond the common limit, existence becomes a burden. We sit at life's feast, smell all its flowers, taste all its dishes, sip all its cups, listen to all the conversation: then, instead of wanting to do it all over again, we rather want to retire and go to sleep. The hardship, in most cases, would be to be too long denied this privilege.

(2) As one generation vacates its seats and makes way for the eager ones that wait to sit down, room is thus made for thousands instead of only hundreds having an opportunity to taste life's pleasures. Let us not be jealous of those who take our empty chairs.

(3) As men naturally become tired of thinking and moving forward, the older generations, if they remained too long, would only become obstructions in the way of the world's progress. Death unclogs the world's wheels, and keeps it moving on. If I ever live to be eighty, I presume I shall be wondering why young men can't let things alone, but must always be doing what I always have been doing up to the present time.

(4) I believe, also, that the thought of the possibility of death sweetens all the experiences of life. We clasp the ones we love with a closer, tenderer clasp because the shadow waits for us all.

(5) And I, for one, will not call so much of life's beauty and delight as I have had an evil, even though it prove true that it is "rounded with a sleep." To-day is good: the sky is blue, the bird-song is music, love is sweet; and all these none the less, though to-night I go to sleep and wake no more.

(6) But if—as I believe—death is only another birth,—

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are ready to pay to it our utmost devotion of heart and life. And so I believe concerning this Bible. Whatever theory goes up or down, taken as a fact, religion is a part of the experience of the world, it is the tidal wave which lifts the aspiring heart of man toward the stars.

It is the result of human experience. And this demonstrates its utility, its power, its grasp on the heart and the brain of the world; and, on the basis of this, we may expect it will forever abide.

The Bible, then, may be left to hold its own place. The religiousness, the reverence, the loyalty, the love, the aspiration of man will not only remain, but will go on, and grow and broaden till they become not only parts, but the very heart and soul, of all that is noble in human civilization.

Father! Thou who art the soul of the world, the soul of man, the soul of religion, of eternal life and power, we yield ourselves to Thee. We ask that we may be guided and helped; that we may learn to listen for the utterance of Thy truth from whatever lips it falls, that thus we may follow and serve Thee more and more faithfully, day by day, now and forevermore. Amen.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. APRIL 27, 1883. No. 30.

SERIES ON

BELIEFS ABOUT THE BIBLE.

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12. THE ETERNAL BIBLE.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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THE ETERNAL BIBLE.*

WHATEVER theory we may hold concerning the universe of which we are a part and in which we live, it is still true that, when we analyze the word to learn its most abstract and general definition, we find that human life consists of a series of actions and reactions between the individual and his environment. You will find, if you will take the trouble to think it out more particularly than I have time to illustrate it this morning, that, in whatever direction you start, whether you deal with man in his social relations, as a business man, as an artist, or what not, that this abstract statement which I have made covers the entire truth. Life consists in a series of actions and reactions between man and the universe. And a successful life, as distinguished from any other kind, depends entirely upon the question whether man perceives the right relations in which he ought to stand to those forces and powers all around him and with which he deals. The commercial man, for example, if he rightly apprehends the problem given him to solve, and is capable of dealing with it, will be a successful merchant. The lawyer, if he rightly apprehends the points of the case given him to manage, and has intelligence and force to mould and shape this case in accordance with what he perceives, will succeed. And so in any other department of human life. And this right relation, or the perception of this right relation, in which man stands, or ought to stand, to the forms and forces of the universe about him, is what we mean by the word "truth." If you will analyze it carefully, you will find that truth has just this meaning and no other. A truth of thought is simply my way of stating the fact that the

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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external reality with which I am dealing corresponds to the thought that I have already in my brain. If, for example, I take a flower in my hand, it impresses me as possessing a certain shape, a certain color, a certain fragrance. If my perception is correct,— that is, if I see the real relation between that flower and my brain,— I see the truth concerning it. The truth, then, in any direction, so far as man's thought is concerned, is only the establishment of perfect correspondence between the thought and the thing. A practical truth, as apart from this abstract truth, is simply a perception and establishment of right relations between man's active faculties and the external world with which he deals.

Now, how does man discover this truth? Is there more than one way? I believe that truth always, everywhere, in all cases, has been discovered, is being discovered to-day, and must be discovered forever, through the process of human experience; for truth pertains to the nature of things. It is a part of our life, of the relationship in which we stand to the forms and forces of the universe about us. To talk of truth away off somewhere in the depths of the universe, that does not touch us, that does not come into relation with us in any way, that has nothing to do practically with our life or thinking, is to talk of nothing. There is no truth for man apart from this truth of perception and practical relationship in which he stands to the life of things around him. Men talk of truth as if it were a sort of entity stored up somewhere outside of the world that could be injected into it from without, as if it were something outside of the nature of things that could be given to man, as though it were a commodity placed in their hands, as though it were a light that could be shed abroad over the earth from outside, as though it were a series of propositions that could be put into men's brains and hearts from some external source.

If I have made you apprehend clearly the very abstract thought with which I began, that truth is simply a part of the nature of things, that it consists essentially in the

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relation in which we stand to the forms and forces that are around us, you will see the absurdity of supposing that either God or man could bring truth from the outside, and put it into the universe or into human life. The only way by which men ever did apprehend or ever can apprehend truth is as the result of their own experience in dealing with these forms and forces with which we come into relation day by day, year after year, and age after age.

Truth, then, always and everywhere, is the result of human experience. There is no other method by which we can possibly come into possession of it. The amount of truth which any race, any people, will possess at any given stage of their experience or progress, will depend, of course, upon the character of that people, upon their intelligence, and upon the range of their experience. It is also true, in every race and in every period of the world's history, that there is some one man or a group of men or a few men scattered here and there, who possess a clearer insight, a keener perception, a broader power of generalization, than is possessed by the common mass of busy people engaged in the practical concerns of life. And these keener, more thoughtful men, those that have the clearer insight, what will they do? They will not be able to discover or formulate any truth that has not been experienced by the race to which they belong, but they will be able to see more clearly that which others dimly feel. They will be able to interpret in language that which the mass of the people have partially apprehended, but to which they have never been able to give expression. Just as you say, when you are listening to a man, "He is giving expression to what I have been feeling after, and half-perceived, for years, but have never been able to put into words;" so precisely these seers, these prophets, these leading men of the world, are able to condense, to crystallize, so to speak, to give outline and form and expression to that which the mass of their fellow-men have experienced and dimly felt. And because this truth that the seers of the world have perceived and

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expressed seems to the mass of the people so wonderful, so much above what they themselves feel capable of saying or clearly apprehending or expressing, we find — and this is true all over the world, in every clime, among every people — that, when these truths of human experience have thus been formulated and expressed, the mass of the people have looked upon them with so much wonder and reverence that they have come to believe that these are a divine revelation, something let down from above, something coming out of the sky. They have not been able to understand that such marvellous truths concerning the universe and human life, such wonderful speculations concerning God and the future, could possibly have sprung out of the common experience of common men. So they have told themselves stories and invented fairy tales of how these seers and prophets have had special ways of access to and intercourse with teachers higher than human. In this way have grown up stories of divine and supernatural revelations of systems of truth. In each case, this supposed divine and supernatural system has only been the fragment of truth which this particular people, up to this particular point in the line of its development, has experienced or been able to put into formal expression.

Two or three results which have been repeated over and over again in the history of the world now come into view. When any particular people has made up its mind that it has received from the gods, or their god, a special, supernatural revelation of truth, then what? Two results in almost every case have followed,— results perfectly natural and springing out of the circumstances in which they found themselves placed. They have received, they think, a divine, supernatural revelation of truth. The next step is that they persuade themselves that they have all the truth there is,— all the truth, at any rate, that men need or ever will need; and so they close their book, their Bible, or revelation, and say, Here, we have a sure and complete compendium of divine truth concerning the origin of this universe, of nature, of

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God, his purposes toward man, and all that pertains to the future of human destiny. The Mahomedan Caliph is reported to have said concerning the Alexandrian Library, "If these books agree with the Koran, we do not need them: if not, they are false. So, in any case, let them be destroyed."

Along with this there always comes a certain spiritual pride, a certain religious self-conceit; and the people fancy that they must be special favorites of heaven,—and why not? If God has singled me out from all the thousands and millions of the world, if he has come in person to me, or sent a special messenger to me to tell me his secret, why should I not feel lifted up above the level of the ordinary run of my fellow-men? If, instead of its being one person, it is a race, precisely the same effect will follow; and so we do find, as a matter of history, that one race after another, in the past, has fancied that it has received this divine revelation, that it possesses a complete system of eternal truth; and, as the next step, it fancies that it is the favorite of God, a chosen people, set apart, selected out of all the nations, and made the depositary of the divine truth.

And then what? Another natural step follows upon the heels of this. One of two things this people will do in such circumstances. They will either build a Chinese wall of exclusiveness around themselves, and look over the rest of the world and down upon it with scorn and contempt, neglect it, fold their arms in a sort of conceited content, and leave it to go its own way to destruction, regarding everybody but their own people as outside barbarians, while they live in the centre of the world and under the very dome of heaven; or else they will regard themselves as a missionary people, to whom this truth has been committed and upon whom has been imposed the duty of bringing all the rest of the world, either by persuasion or force, into subjugation to their ideas. We find that different religions have illustrated both types. Take the Chinese, for example. They occupy the Central, Flowery Kingdom, and all the rest of the world are outside barbarians. They never think of sending out missionaries

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to conquer the rest of the world. It seems to them a matter of slight importance whether the rest possess the truth or not, or what their destiny in the future may be.

On the other hand, take the Buddhists, the Christians, the Mohammedans. They have considered themselves as divinely commissioned to proselyte all the rest of the world. They have sent out missionaries to compel them to come in. If they would not come in as the result of persuasion, they felt they must force them; as the Mohammedans wrote their short creed,— Allah is Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet — on the point of the sword, thus, if in no other way, thrusting it down the throat or into the hearts of their enemies.

Thus, each people has taken its fragment of truth, and supposed it to be the divine and complete system of religion. It has written its Bible, and supposed that here was the closed canon of the revelation of God, that they and they alone were the depositaries of eternal truth. This belief could very easily be held by any nation, as long as it was isolated, as long as the nations knew very little of each other, as long as there was no possibility of frequent communication all over the world. It is only within fifty years, perhaps, that some of these great systems of religion have been opened up to the thought and life of the modern world. As long as each people stayed at home and knew very little about its neighbors, it could very comfortably maintain its self-conceit, and suppose that it was the only civilized people, the only one that had any respectable religious ideas, the only one that had any noble principles of ethics, the only one that had ever received any light from heaven or understood the mysteries of God. But a change must come to any state like this. How does it come? As I have indicated. The one source of truth is experience, and the new movement comes as the result of deepened, broadened, enlarged human experience. These nations living quietly by themselves, so exclusive in their selfish content, have been compelled to become acquainted with each other.

War has done something toward this larger civilization.

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For, when nations fight with each other and come into the rough shock of conflict, they learn the stuff of which this other people is made; and there comes to them a larger sympathy of humanity, a larger feeling of the common elements of greatness, a larger appreciation of the fact that they are not the only people in the world, but that there are others, wise and mighty and strong as they.

Commerce has done more even than war; for it has covered all the seas with ships, and men have gone to and fro, discovering the common brotherhood of humanity, finding similar religious and intellectual ideas, similar ethical principles. They have brought home the story; and so these ideas have been scattered from one nation to another, thus becoming the common property of civilization.

Discovery and scientific investigation have done something, for they have sent their explorers all over the world to study the history of these alien civilizations, their literature, their religious and moral ideas; and, thus, they have given us a grander and broader conception of men, nature, and life. So these various influences have been at work, and men have taken a higher position as the result of the growing experience of the world and of human life; and this growing experience has written a new chapter in the perception of truth, that the wise and thoughtful of all the world may read.

What has been the result? This old belief, on the part of these separated nationalities and religions, that they had all the truth, and that they were the only ones that had, is passing away. It has become impossible for an intelligent man any longer to believe it. Two grand objections face us, — and either one of them is strong enough to overthrow completely this theory,— an intellectual objection and a moral objection.

The intellectual objection I have already hinted and partly outlined. What have men learned, what have we Christians learned concerning some of the other religions of the world? We have learned that our experience has not been unique, but that it has been the universal experience of the

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world. We have learned also that our system of truth is only a fragment of the universal truth. We have learned that other people, other nations, have passed through similar experiences, and consequently have arrived at similar conclusions; that they have discovered similar truths, similar ideas concerning the universe, God, and man, similar principles of morals, or ideas of right and wrong. We have learned that they have Bibles of their own, and that they think they came by divine revelation, as we have thought ours did; that they have set themselves up as the exclusive possessors of divine truth, just as we have; that they have had the same kind of conceit that we have had; that they have supposed they were favorites of God, as we have supposed we were; and that they have started out to convert the world, just as we have, and for precisely the same reasons. Furthermore, we have found that they have just as much reason for holding these opinions as we have had, no more and no less.

What is the next step? We are forced to the conclusion that one of two things is true. Either there were half a dozen divine revelations and half a dozen infallible Bibles,—in which case, we wonder why it would not have been just as well to give one universal, complete one in the first place; or to the conviction that there is not any universal religion in existence or any universal and infallible truth or any infallible Bible, but that we all have passed through similar stages, and by similar steps of human experience have arrived at similar conclusions. The result is irresistible that the truth we have reached has come to us — no less from God than on the other theory — through the process and by the method of our human experience in living out our life and dealing with these great principles and forces of the universe that touch us on every hand.

The moral objection is quite as strong as the intellectual one. As men grow wiser, as they grow better, as they have a larger conception of human brotherhood, broader ideas of justice, a deeper thought of truth, a wider sympathy and

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more care for human welfare, it ceases to be possible for them to believe that the infinite God of this universe cares any more about one part of his children than he does about the rest. It ceases to be possible for man with a grandly developed and sympathetic moral nature to feel that the God of the whole earth is capable of being partial, of having his pets, of selecting either individuals or nations and giving them his special care, and leaving all the rest to wander in darkness, to fall into pits of destruction. The highest and noblest moral natures of the world would find it impossible to worship, or even to respect, a God who was capable of a partiality like that. It ceases then to be morally possible for men to hold this old exclusive, partial, selfish conception of God, of religion, of the Bible, of divine and infallible truth.

What then? What is the next step to which we are forced? This, plain and inevitable: a recognition of the fact that these separate and distinct religions are only parts of the universal religion yet to come; that these separate and closed Biblical canons are only chapters in the universal and eternal Bible, as yet only partially written.

I want now to note two main characteristics of this eternal Bible.

In the first place, it must cover and include all truth that touches the concerns of life and the welfare of man. In the second place, it must be forever being written and never done. These are the two tests by which you may judge the universal and eternal Bible of God.

Religion in its conception as it has hitherto prevailed in the world has been narrow. It has concerned itself only with a little fragment of human life. We talk about religion *and* business, religion *and* politics, religion *and* science, religion *and* art, religion *and* morality. The coming grander and truer conception of religion will, of necessity, sweep all these particulars under its one grand generalization. A man must be religious in business, religious in politics, religious in science, religious in art, religious in everything. It

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must be the quality that permeates all life, the atmosphere that men breathe everywhere. Religion is the secret of the highest, truest life of man. Religion is the expression we give to the relation in which we stand to the universe,— that is, to God. It is our dealing with him. It is our dealing with the totality of life. No man can be in the broadest and truest and deepest sense of the word religious, except as he is a complete man, in right relations to all the forms and forces of the universe about him. And, if he is a complete and true man, he gives utterance to the truest and deepest conception of the religious life; for that is what religion means.

Religion, then, must deal with the physical nature of man. And here is one particular in which the Old Testament is far ahead of the New. Moses places sanitary laws side by side with the command to worship one God and no more, making one of equal importance with the other. The New Testament throws contempt upon this world, and speaks slightingly of the body, "this vile body," "Bodily exercise profiteth little," etc. It is sprinkled all over with passages expressing contempt for this world, the material side of things; and yet there never was a sane or true religion except as it based itself on a sound and healthy physical life. We must begin with our religion right here. Cleanliness is not next to godliness merely. It is a part of godliness; and so is every other sanitary regulation that touches the welfare and health of the physical man.

This eternal Bible must go over the whole realm of truth. It must include all man's social relations, all political relations, all international relations, all science, all art. It must include everything that touches the life and happiness of man. The eternal Bible, then, will cover and include all truth, so far as it is developed and wrought out as the result of the experience of the world.

I said that its second characteristic was that it was always being written and never finished. This, you will see, springs naturally out of the principles thus far developed. Truth,

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as far as it appertains to the welfare of man, being the result of human experience, developed by it, presented as the result of it, must of course keep step with human experience, and can never transcend it, so that humanity writes a new sentence in its Bible with every new step of human experience, with every new and larger contact with the universe in which it lives. The boy has the truth which pertains to the boyish nature; but, as he grows up and becomes a young man, he comes into new experiences, which enlarge and broaden his ideas. He has new and wider conceptions of life, that enable him to live the true life of a young man. The middle-aged man and the old man come into new experiences as they advance; and, thus, truth keeps step with human life.

This Bible, then, is not done. It never will be done, until the last thinking being is weary of thought, and fallen asleep.

There is one other phase of my subject, carrying it on and rounding it out, that I wish to bring to your thought, and which may seem somewhat new to you, put in just the way in which I propose to state it. Is there any reason in the nature of things why we should forever look at God, the universe, the great truths of religion, through Hebrew eyes and none other? Let us be glad and thankful for all the Hebrews saw. Let us rejoice for the depth and breadth of their religious experience, and take it as our light and guidance, as far as it extends; but is there any reason why Americans should not come into contact, first hand, with the divine, as well as Hebrews, Egyptians, Buddhists, and Mohammedans? Is it not the same God above us? Are not the same heavens over us as bright with stars as were those that shone over the Judean hills? Are there not now as fair flowers, as fresh grasses, as those from which Jesus drew his lessons of religion and life? Are not as noble hearts, as unselfish devotion manifested to-day, as high qualities of manhood and womanhood in society as in olden times? Reversing and changing the purpose of those questions of Shylock, may we not say instead: Hath not an

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American eyes? Hath not an American a heart, brain, soul, religious faculties, moral perceptions, as well as a Jew or a Buddhist or a Mohammedan? Do we not stand in as intimate and close relations with the father-heart of God in the nineteenth century as men stood five hundred, a thousand, two, three thousand years ago? Has God moved farther off? Are the heavens more distant? Are we less wise, less capable of thinking, less capable of feeling than they were in the olden time?

I appeal to your consciousness, to your clearer thought, as to what are the ideals, the forces, and the methods that govern your own life to-day? Are you not guided by the Bible of the ages instead of the Bible of the Hebrews and the Christians? What are the doctrines, the ideas, the beliefs that are moulding and shaping your life to-day? They are a part of the life of to-day and not those of two thousand or five thousand years ago.

Where is our book of Genesis? It is not in the Bible. The book of Genesis that we believe in and that we are guided by was written by Copernicus, by Galileo, by Newton, by Laplace, by Lyell, by Spencer, by Darwin. And, if we profess to believe in the old Genesis, we are perpetually re-interpreting and retranslating its ideas, so that they shall echo Copernicus and these other men. Where is our book of the Law? Do we really go to the Pentateuch to find out the principles by which we shall guide and govern our daily lives? No. We go to those men and to a hundred others who have studied for us and laid down the laws of this actual universe of which we are a part. We go to men like Dr. Carpenter, of London, to find out how this marvellous body of ours is made. Servetus and Harvey wrote some sentences in this wondrous book of the Law. Ferrier in his studies of the brain, Bain and his co-workers and compeers in outlining the marvellous nature and functions of our nervous system,— these men who have studied the real laws of the universe and human life, and have written them for us, they, not the Pentateuch, are the real book of the Law by which

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the modern world is being guided, whatever men may say or profess about it. Where are our divine histories, those that really move and control the world? They are not the Kings, Samuel, Judges, and the Chronicles of the Old Testament. They are the histories of Greece, of Rome, of the Middle Ages, of Germany, of the rise and progress of modern civilization, Green's history of the English people, Bancroft's history of America, all those that have given us the sources of that stream of national life of which we are a part. These are the histories that are moving the modern world.

Who are our heroes? Are they any longer Samuel, Jephthah, Gideon, and David, and the grand names of the old book that are a part of our childhood thought? No: they are the men that have fought for truth and for freedom and for human advancement. Our heroes are Winkelried, the barons that met King John at Runnymede, Cromwell of the Commonwealth, that grand group allied to Washington that figured in our Revolution, other men like Lincoln and Garrison, men that have stood for truth and human right. These are the heroes that shine like stars in our moral and intellectual firmament, that give us the light by which we are guided and the inspiration for our every-day life.

Where are our ideal women? Are they Miriam and Deborah and Ruth and Esther and Mary and Dorcas, those that are simply names to us in the olden book? Are they not rather Mary Carpenter and Florence Nightingale and Frances Power Cobbe and Marian Evans of England, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Thompson, Mary A. Livermore, and a hundred others I might name, that are making and shaping the life of these modern times? If women like these had lived in the ancient days, they would have towered so much above the noblest of them all that either they would have been persecuted and put to death as ahead of their time, or idealized and worshipped as divine.

Who are the prophets and seers that lead and inspire us now? They will still continue to be in part those who have written the noble, burning words that have led on the

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world for so many centuries; but added to these are all the great religious leaders,— Zoroaster, Gautama, Confucius, Socrates,— the great men of more recent times,— Savonarola, Wickliff, Luther, Wesley, Swedenborg, Channing, Theodore Parker, these great seers, utterers of divine truth, those that have lifted up and led on the life of the world.

And what are really the Gospels that fire us, that come to us whispering their good news? They are in part those that have been written in the days of old. They include the Gospels of our New Testament, the light and life that came through Jesus of Nazareth; but they include also those other flashes of light that have come out of the inner heavens of human thought and life, and are streaming out of them still. They are to be found very largely in the ranks of those men that have been thought to be opposed to gospel and to God, in the ranks of men doing the work of science. These are bringing to us the good news that man is mighty, that there are secret forces and powers in this universe that man can discover, that he can harness as his servants and compel to do his work. They are discovering that man may control and mould all the forces of the universe around him, and lift himself up from drudgery and slavery to that nature that has dominated him so long.

Where are the apocalypses, those that unfold the future and teach us what it is that is coming? They are not like that wonderful phantasmagorical dream of John that closes the New Testament. They are again these same men of science; for, as Patrick Henry said, there is no way of foretelling the future except by the past. And it is the study of this past, the study of the principles that underlie and control the development of civilization up to this hour, that are indicating the possibilities of future growth and progress. And, looking along the line of these up the ages, by a faith that is not credulity, a faith forever springing out of human experience a faith based in the nature of things, we see man sceptred and crowned controlling the world, with its forces at his feet,

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its mightiest powers his ministers, himself master henceforth of the world and of his destiny.

These, then, I say, are the real chapters of the eternal Bible that are being written age after age as the result of human discovery and experience,— a Bible not yet complete, a Bible in which each new truth is a sentence, and each new grand discovery a chapter or a book, and that shall go on being written by the finger of God in human life forever. And, as it progresses, it shall cease to be a book whose every page is blood-spattered, as were the Old Testament books of the past. No longer shall its pages be defaced with so copious a rain of human tears. It shall not be so largely made up of groans at the world's injustice or with human cries for help. For the time shall come, it is coming progressively, when this truth of God shall be more and more written in the hearts and lives of men, and when it shall be no longer necessary to say to one another, know thou the Lord, know thou the truth, know thou the perfect religious life; for all shall know and live in the harmony of this truth and life the wide world over forevermore.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MAY 4, 1883. No. 31.

IN A GOOD LIGHT.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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IN A GOOD LIGHT.*

"Be kindly affectioned one to another." — ROMANS xii., 10.

WHEN an artist has succeeded in getting a picture accepted by the committee of an exhibition, he knows perfectly well that only a small part of the needful work is done to bring his painting properly before an appreciative public. The hanging committee, by placing it on the wall where its surroundings are not fitting or by putting it in a bad light, may make it impossible for the picture to be properly seen or appreciated. But, though it be hung in the proper place and the light be everything desired, even this is not all. The artist knows that it must be observed by eyes that are sound and normal, physically considered; and, after all this, everything will depend on the appreciation and the disposition of the public, whether they care to see, or whether they can see, if they so desire, the ideal of beauty which he has outlined.

The same principle is to be observed in regard to the criticism of a book. If a book shall be a success or not depends — supposing the book to be what it claims to be — on the attention and the appreciation of the public, whether they desire to understand it, whether it meets their want at the time. It is a fundamental principle of criticism that every book should be considered in the light of the spirit that inspired it. You must, if you can, get the stand-point of the author, find out what he intended to do, and then have a spirit and disposition that is kindly and appreciative and that desires to take it at its best. A large part of the criti-

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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cism that one comes across in the reviews and newspapers is made from an utterly false stand-point and in the light, perhaps, of anything but the purpose of the author. How many times may we read, "The author of this book does not seem to have understood" — something that was wholly foreign to the purpose of the book, something that perhaps he understood as well as any one else, only this was not the place, in his view, to give expression to it. How many times do you read that a book contains so and so; but "the author has omitted entirely to mention" — something that he did not intend to mention, something that had no place in the plan or scope of his work. That is, a large part of the criticism of the world is futile, from the fact that it does not take the stand-point of the author; it does not give the book a good light; it does not come to it with a kindly disposition, with the intention of seeing it at its best.

Precisely the same principle holds in regard to fine architecture. How shall a magnificent building — a cathedral, for example — make its impression on the beholder? It must be in a good light, and the person who is to look upon it must occupy the proper stand-point, so that the purpose, the plan of the architect, may be comprehended. After that, everything will depend on the disposition of the beholder, upon his powers of appreciation, upon whether he wishes to appreciate it. For, in the case of painting, book, or cathedral, a little spite, indifference, prejudice, hatred, may make the beholder so utterly blind that he shall be incapable of seeing the finest and noblest things that the authors have conceived and really given expression to in their work.

There are, then, at least four things necessary to the proper comprehension and appreciation of anything.

First, there must be the proper position or stand-point from which to observe. Second, there must be a good light in which to see. Third, there must be a normal or healthy faculty of vision. The person who is color-blind is unfit to judge a picture, however wise he may be, however trained an artist, however kindly in disposition. And there is one

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thing to be noted: people that are color-blind, unless it has been demonstrated to them by a physician, are never conscious of it, and so they do not know the mistakes into which they inevitably fall; and this is true of mental and moral color-blindness as well as of physical.

I have mentioned only three things,—position, light, a normal or healthy vision. Then, back of all this, and more important than all, there should be a disposition in the beholder to see the purpose of the author, to give things their due, to see things at their best. Now, these principles are just as important, just as fundamental, to our seeing the world, to our outlook over humanity, to our comprehension of the little group of people who make up our world, and even to our seeing and comprehending ourselves.

My purpose this morning is purely a practical one. I want to ask you to consider this principle, and see its applications to the world, to our neighbors, our friends, and to ourselves. Let us take these simple practical points in their order. And, first, as to the judgment that men pass on our universe and upon humanity. You are aware of the fact that there are great schools of philosophy that go by the name of pessimistic. Pessimism is a word derived from the Latin, meaning the worst. That school of thought looks over the universe and mankind, and comes to the conclusion that everything is bad. Some of these philosophers go so far as to say that, instead of this being the best possible world, or even a passably good one, it is the worst possible, the worst that anybody could conceive. Everything in it, from first to last, from highest to lowest, is bad,—irredeemably, irreclaimably bad. Hartmann, one of the foremost thinkers of modern Germany, has carried his ideas so far as to say that the only hopeful outcome of it all is that the world shall finally be educated up to the firm conviction that everything is just as bad as it can be; and then, in some way or other, by an united and gigantic effort of the human will, the race of man may be blotted out of existence and the world return to the unconsciousness from which, by a blunder, it first

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came. This, in its baldest expression, is the philosophy of pessimism.

Now let us turn for a moment and look at the other side. There is another school of philosophy that goes by the name of optimism, which believes that everything is for the best; that evil is only a shadow of good; that sorrow and pain are only passing phases in the development of life. With the optimist, everything is light and sunshine and joy; and the outlook is not annihilation, but a constantly increasing life and peace and goodness and gladness, that shall go on forever.

And now the point I wish you to notice is, not that these two schools exist, but that these opposite thinkers come to their opposite conclusions from a study of precisely the same old world. Calvin, for example, the theological pessimist, studies and deals with the same humanity that occupies the mind of Channing, the theological optimist. With Calvin, mankind was utterly and essentially and irreclaimably bad. Even the little tender infant, just opening its blue eyes to reflect the blue of the bright heavens, with its first smile on its lips answering back the loving look of the mother,—this little child is just a little embryo devil, covering up the possibility of infinite sin and infinite woe. On the other hand, the one note on which Channing played his infinite variations all his life long was the dignity of human nature; and he looked upon the lowest, worst, poorest, most outcast specimen of mankind as a possible divinity, as holding at its heart infinite capacity for unfolding in goodness and in joy. Now, it is precisely the same world in which both Channing and Calvin lived, and they dealt with the same material. Where, then, is the difference? Is the world utterly bad, or is it perfectly good? Neither the one nor the other. There is evil, there is good. There are tears, there are smiles. There is sorrow, there is joy. The different estimates, then, that men put upon the universe and upon human life depends largely upon what they are themselves,—upon the emphasis that they lay upon the facts,—whether they

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judge the world at its poorest or at its best, at its lowest or at its highest.

Suppose a man should go through an orchard in October, with his eyes bent down to the ground, seeing and picking up only worm-eaten windfalls, and judging the whole orchard by these specimens as he passes through. These are the product of the orchard. They are facts. They exist. They are worm-eaten. They are worthless. They are just as bad as the man says they are. Perhaps they have hardly a redeeming feature or quality about them. But it is not only an absurdity, but gross injustice, if the fruit-trees are to be judged after this fashion. The orchard is capable of producing golden, luscious fruit, half leaf-hidden in the topmost boughs; and fairness requires that it should be judged by these highest results, these noblest possibilities, rather than by the poor abortive specimens, these partial accomplishments.

The lark rises from the meadow on some bright summer morning, and goes singing away into the blue; and its world is just one song and one glory of brightness, of beauty, and of music. Over this same meadow, the buzzard slowly flies, looking not up, but down, if, by any possibility, it may scent out somewhere a bit of carrion. To the buzzard, the world is all carrion. It thinks of nothing else, desires nothing else, knows nothing else. By which standard shall the life and the beauty of the landscape be judged? They both exist. But the world, it seems to me, if we are to be sane in our estimate, is to be taken at its best. We must apply the principle that Paul has condensed into the few words that I have taken for my text,— Be kindly affectioned one to another. Be kindly disposed. Be ready to see the best. Be ready to hear the music. Be ready to notice the sunshine. Be ready to believe in goodness, and to take things at their highest possibility, and not at their lowest.

But I wish to leave this wider world and come closer home. It is true that we are inhabitants of the universe. We are a part of this great *all*, infinite in its range and in-

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comprehensible in its sweep; and yet there is only a little part of this infinity with which we come into direct contact. Out of all the millions of the population of the globe, it is only, at the very most, the small number of thousands, probably only a few hundreds, that make up that part of the world that you and I care anything about,— that part of the world whose opinions we need to trouble ourselves with, that we come into personal contact with, that is able to make us happy or miserable by its dealings with us. It is made up of the few people in our home, our neighbors, the people on the street, the members of the same church that we attend, the people with whom we are thrown into business relations, the general society in which we move,— these few constitute the world in which you and I live.

Now, how shall we regard this world, and what kind of a world is it? Are the people that inhabit it — your friends, neighbors, business associates — very bad people? Are they remarkably good people? The chances are that they are neither one nor the other, but that they are just about the average. The probability is that the inhabitants of this little world are very much the kind of people that you and I are. They mean, on the whole, to do right. They are generally kindly, good neighbors; in the main, honest in their business, people that we can get along with perhaps as comfortably as they can with us, to say the least. At the same time there are a great many unpleasant things in this little world, a great many people who have dispositions not over-sweet, a great many people who are a little selfish, people who have all sorts of odd peculiarities, sharp corners that we may knock ourselves against, if we will. But, on the other hand, are there not all these other qualities? The good husband, the loving, true wife, the kindly father and mother, the dutiful children, the obliging neighbor, the honest business man, the faithful friend,— all of these also exist.

Now, the practical point I want to bring out is that it depends on you and me very largely what kind of a world

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we shall live in, what sort of a·sphere this little one of ours shall be. Where will we lay the emphasis?

I used to notice, when I lived in California, that people there did very much what they do here,—they judged the world from their own door-yard. How many times I have heard people say: "'How do you like California? What kind of a place is it?" And, almost invariably, the picture of California drawn in reply was made from the speaker's own house, his own door-yard, the street in which he lived. It was "perfectly delightful" or "perfectly horrid," according to the personal and limited surroundings to which the speaker referred. If a person lived somewhere in one of the beautiful valleys, in the midst of green trees, with lovely mountains in view just the other side of the bay, if he had been prosperous in business, if he was happy in home life, then everything was glorious, and California was a wonderful State. But, if the situation of things happened to be reversed, then California got the credit or the discredit. But neither of these judgments is true. California, like every other State, is made up of the two qualities; and no picture can be true that does not include them both. At the same time, it has a right to be judged at its best; and that best, as I believe is the case in almost all the States of the Union, is in the majority.

It is wonderful how large a part of our world we make ourselves. I suppose, if you should take a magnifying glass of wonderful power, and should examine the finest and most velvety dimpled hand of a baby, you could turn it into something positively repulsive; and, if your eyes were only magnifying glasses, so that you could see things distorted, exaggerated out of proportion, the most beautiful world would simply be horrible to live in. If you turn your imaginings into eyes, if you learn to think of and dwell on the disagreeable sides of human life and character, it is as though we saw them, and they made up the major part of the surroundings of our life.

I remember reading, some years ago, about a priest who

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supposed it pious to look on the world from the most gloomy stand-point. He was accustomed to say, when he looked at the face of a beautiful woman, that he always thought of how that face would look when it was silent in death and after decay had wrought its work upon it, when the skin had turned to darkness, and the flesh had fallen away, and the hideous death's-head shone through. Now, if a person chooses to live in the tombs, we have nothing to say to him. He must follow his own bent: only, this is not the world; this is not life; a corpse is not a man. He who selects this to see, to imagine, to dwell upon, to live in, simply reveals his own nature and character, and the kind of thought and heart by which he is moved. We can make our little world beautiful, sweet, musical, pleasant, or the opposite, very much as we please; and we do make it what we are. If it seems to us a pretty bad world, the question arises whether our mental and moral eyes do not need the services of a physician; and whether, instead of spitting out our contempt upon our neighbors and friends, we do not need to seek some fountain of moral and mental cleanliness and health.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Let me show you two or three types of character, that you may see the kind of world they live in.

Take the man or woman who is over-critical, who is nothing if not critical, who makes it his or her business to spy out faults and defects. If they go to a concert, and there happens to be a discord within half an hour, they spend the first fifteen minutes waiting for it and the last fifteen thinking of it, forgetting all the rest of the music, but keeping their nerves on edge with that which was disagreeable. Suppose a person should go to the refectory of that old convent in Milan, and look at the marvellous picture of the Last Supper which is painted on the wall, and, instead of seeing the conception of the artist and the magnificent execution, should spend his time in noticing where the plaster had dropped here and there, causing a defect in the outline of some face; or suppose he should fall to criticising its truth to historical reality,

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should say the picture is not good because Jesus and his disciples never arranged themselves on one side of the table in this way, as if they were going to sit for their photographs,—such a man would be as wise as one who should find fault with Shakspere's marvellous plays because he places continents, rivers, and towns to suit the fancy of his genius rather than according to the actual facts of the atlas. Let a person go into society or among friends with this over-critical spirit, and he lives in a world of discord and fault-finding; for he makes it so, and he himself is the greatest discord and fault of all.

Take, again, a jealous, envious person, one who regards it as a personal insult if another succeeds where he has failed. Although he may have succeeded enough to make a reasonable man happy, yet, because he has failed in this particular thing, he spits out his spleen and venom on all his neighbors and friends. Instead of rejoicing because his neighbor has a fine house, he is miserable because he himself does not own it. If I were not able to have a park and a garden of beautiful flowers, I would cultivate the faculty of enjoying the flowers and gardens that some one else owns and has to be at the expense of keeping in order. It is worth while to cultivate such a faculty.

There is another type of character which I think the most unfortunate of any, and which can, perhaps, best be described by the word "scandal-loving." It is the characteristic of those who take more delight in finding something at fault in their neighbors' characters than in anything else. You must have noticed, in driving along the country roads in summer, that certain flies are always pursuing the carriage, and that they fix upon any chafed or sore spot that the horse may happen to have. The flies care nothing for the beauty of the country road or the pleasure of the way. They care only for the scent of disease, the taste of blood. So some men and women — perhaps they cannot help it, perhaps they were born so — find out only the faults of society. If they find it whispered around that one of their dearest friends

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has done an improper thing, instead of being sorry, they forget the pain and the evil, the sorrow of it all, in the joy of their discovery; and they in turn whisper it to others, before they have any idea whether it is really true, just because they cannot resist the pleasure of rolling so sweet a morsel under the tongue. I speak of this, not because I know of many people in this society who need any hint in this direction, but because it strikes at a characteristic of human nature, the germ of which, perhaps, is in all of us, and which we need carefully to suppress instead of cultivating. I think there is a little of it in us all. We like, at any rate, to startle people with a piece of news; and, if it has a sensational quality about it, all the better. I notice how natural this is in the home. When the morning paper comes, even the children turn to the column of accidents and crimes. These things are attractive, perhaps because there is in them an element of excitement and romance.

If we wish to live in a sweet, loving, and beautiful world, we need only to follow the advice of the text and be kindly affectioned one to another. Look for the best things. Try to find them. They are there; and, if we only open our eyes for them, we shall find them. Take an artist and an angler and put them into the same meadow, and, if the angler does not find any fish, he goes away disappointed, and says there is nothing there. Meantime, the artist sits down on the trunk of a fallen tree, and the meadow is so full of beauty to him that he cannot express it all. Bees and butterflies, in a summer afternoon, fly from flower to flower, attracted by the fragrance, seeing the beauty, and finding the sweet, not because there is nothing else there, but because they naturally love these things, and the world to them is made up of the things they love and seek. If you look over human history, you will see how large a number of the great tragedies of the world have come to pass simply because men and women have not attained this practical disposition of being kindly affectioned one to another. What is it that lies at the root of that disgraceful chapter of the world's

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history that culminated in the hemlock cup that Socrates was compelled to drink? Nothing but the lack of that kindly feeling which would have enabled his countrymen to see and appreciate the beautiful traits in Socrates' character. What is it that kindled the fire that burned up the flesh of Vanini, one of the noblest theists of the world, treated, however, as an atheist? Lack of this kindly, generous feeling toward those from whom we happen to differ. What is at the root of persecutions, misunderstandings, and arrogant words that have disfigured the progress of religion? It is the lack of this spirit of affection.

If we come a little closer home, how many of our friends have we seen alienated and separated all through a little lack of tender, kindly affection one toward another. Women, for example, who have taken offence at a private party, or fancying that they are slighted because they are not invited this way or that, or because some one, near-sighted perhaps, did not speak to them on the sidewalk. Men, showing precisely the same qualities and disposition, because of little things, "getting out," as we say with their fellows, and nourishing life-long feuds and bitternesses. How many such cases can you all recall! Friends who ought to clasp hands and co-operate, because, in the main, they are both noble and true, separated, unwilling to recognize each other on the street, because of some little petty contemptible thing, some infringement, as they suppose, of personal right, some misunderstanding that a little kindliness of disposition on the part of either would have passed by as of no account. How many homes are there, where the husband and the wife are alienated; where the wife weeps in secret and is sorrowful in her dreams; where the husband, though there are no outward tears shed, feels them falling, drip, drip, all the more bitterly, because they are secret and in the heart? From how many such homes has the fair-eyed Angel of Peace and Love fled away in sorrow, since there is no longer place for her in that house that was entered but a little time ago by hearts that thought they would never be in anything but

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unison and love! And all for nothing that is of any worth. Some trifling thing that a kindly disposition would have brushed away with the lightest possible touch.

We all need to apply this principle to our own lives as well. I do not believe that the main part of the people of this world are over-conceited and need to be "taken down," as we say. It is my judgment that the larger number of honest, earnest people suffer from lack of courage and self-confidence more than they do from over-conceit. I meet people on every hand who are discouraged. They have measured themselves against the great world, and have not succeeded in the things that they desired, and thus are discouraged and heart-sick, and almost ready to give up attempting anything great or noble. Then there are a great many who feel that their life is a failure, and who need courage and cheer. Though they may have succeeded in some instance, they have missed that particular thing on which they had set their hearts. I know women, for example, noble mothers, tender, true wives, loving and sweet and fair, who carry week-long, month-long, year-long, a sense of failure. Why? Because, in this age of unrest and new aspirations and new outlooks for women, they have not been able, perhaps, to write a book, to make a speech, or do something worthy of a career. And, perhaps, because they have not been able to succeed in this direction, they really are in danger of failing in that which I regard as unspeakably grander and more noble. How many books that men have written will be read a hundred years from now? How many of the speeches that men have made will be remembered even twenty-five years hence? These same loving, true, tender women have it in their hands, perhaps, to make sunshine, an atmosphere for the home and for the circle of friends, to add to the world's happiness. I would a good deal rather feel that I had made the world a little happier than that I had done anything else in the course of my life.

We need, then, to take this lesson home to ourselves, and to learn to be kindly disposed and lenient toward our own

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characters, to judge them gently, not to be easily discouraged, not to think that we have failed because we have not accomplished this thing or that, but to lay the emphasis on the *best* thing we have done. Just as we judge the world and our friends, let us judge ourselves,—by the highest and the noblest that is in us.

Give a good light to your picture;
Bring its form and color out;
Finest work, if hid in shadow,
E'en a friendly eye may doubt.

Seek to set your world in sunshine;
Learn to see but what is fair;
If you look for light and goodness,
Truly they exist somewhere.

Sure your friends are good as paintings;
Try to see them at their best:
Call out all the noblest in them;
Wisely, then, forget the rest.

For yourselves, a high ideal
Hold aloft; but fear no man.
Ne'er despair; for earth's grand prizes
Wait for him who says, I can!

Father, we ask that this spirit of gentleness, of truth, of love, of devotion, of kindliness, may come into our hearts and pervade our lives like an atmosphere, and that we may be led and lifted into this light, until, in its glory, we shall see thee and all the world and all the future, and thus be courageous and strong to do something to realize the vision of beauty and glory that lifts us up and lures us on. Amen.

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SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MAY 11, 1883. No. 32.

GLORIFYING THE COMMONPLACE.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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GLORIFYING THE COMMONPLACE.*

"Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."—EXODUS iii., 5.

WHEN we are urged from any source, by a speaker, a book, or some higher thought of our own, to a nobler life; when we are urged to think on a higher level, to aspire to something better than the average of our daily living; whether we speak of it or not, or put our excuse into words, it seems to me, if I may judge by observation and experience, that we are accustomed to say within ourselves: All this may be easy for some, but I am peculiarly situated. I have temptations such as are not common to others; there are obstacles in my path that I cannot easily overleap; there are no motives that appeal to me with sufficient force. My life is commonplace; and, in the midst of commonplace surroundings, you can look for no grand and noble life. We are accustomed to think that the great ones of the earth—like Jupiter, when he visited men, coming down from Olympus—step with gigantic stride from mountain peak to peak, while we plod along in the hot, dusty highways in the valleys. That we may see the possibility in every life of redeeming the commonplace, of making it significant, of lifting it up to a place of glory, I purpose to ask you to consider with me the distinction between the commonplace and the grand, and to see what is the personal relation in which we stand to these two phases or orders of life.

Everything the wide world over is in a certain sense commonplace to those who have been accustomed to or are

* Phonographically reported by Isabel C. Barrows.

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familiar with it. A farmer's boy, dreaming of what his future life shall be, wondering whether he can ever take his place among the great, looks far off through the mist that surrounds him, the mist of his imagination, the halo of romance, and he sees perhaps the White House in the distance. It looks to him like another world. All is glory, grandeur, superiority of life. It has a meaning that is above all the common level of the plodding existence in which hitherto he has found himself. Yet this same farmer's boy, transported to the White House, elevated to the position of master there, finds that the romance has all fled. He is a common man, weary, perplexed, worn, ill like other men; or all his ideals destroyed perchance, he is a common, scheming man. The glory has faded, and it has become a commonplace life to him.

A man who has published a book finds that the glory of authorship has faded away after he has held it in his hands for a little while. It is just as commonplace to him after he has done it as any of the familiar things that any other men may have done. So concerning all the phases of life.

The country people who live at the foot of Mt. Washington do not rise every morning, as tourists do, to get some new and grander vision of this magnificent feature of the landscape. They simply go the common round of their existence, perhaps not taking the trouble even to go a quarter of a mile out of their way to get some view that others dream of for years, and then reach at last as the consummation of their ideal visions. I remember that Lowell in his *Fireside Travels* — an intensely interesting book, by the way — tells of meeting, when he first visited the White Mountains, one of these common livers in the midst of these marvellous scenes, and asking him if he had ever been to such a place. No: he had never been at the trouble to go. And then, recognizing that which lies at the heart of it, he continued, "Now, I suppose that, if I should ever go down to Boston, I should just stare and gawk around down there, as you do when you come up here." The principle that is involved here is that what is familiar ceases to be a wonder. The commonplace-

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ness, then, inheres not in the things themselves, but in the heart and the soul of man. And the grand visions are there too, if one finds them at all.

Everything, then, in one sense, is commonplace to him who is familiar with it. On the other hand,—and this is just as important,—there is nothing that is commonplace to him who is capable of looking beneath the surface and seeing the meaning of things.

Let me recur again to the man living in the country, a farmer. Perhaps in the midst of his grain field there is a gigantic boulder which is in his way, which is a nuisance to him. He plans year after year to blow it up and break it in pieces and carry it off. He sees nothing in it but an obstruction, a trouble. But a scholar, a geologist, passing the spot, finds this same boulder brimful of an interest that links the ages gone with the present, and that tells him a story not only of earth history, but of human history, human life, and human progress. He notes the fact that the stone is of a different formation from those to be found elsewhere in the region, and he traces it to its home, perhaps hundreds of miles to the north. By the scratches and marks upon it, he reads of the ice age thousands and thousands of years ago; and, by his scientific imagination, he builds up the earth again as it was in that glacial epoch. So, in that which has no meaning to the one, the other finds a world of scientific significance.

That all these things are in the eye and in the heart is apparent from the life of the poet or the novelist, as compared with any other men. Scotland was a commonplace country, with no romance around its hills and its lakes and its wonderful scenes till the mighty magician of the North, Walter Scott, waved his wand over its fields and mountains and made them all alive with story, and created people that are more real to the thought of the world than are its kings and its queens and all those who have made their mark in the history of its past.

Everything, then, in a country, in life, in a scene, is com-

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monplace or not according to the eyes that look at it, the ears that listen to its sounds, and the souls that catch and give back the reflection of its natural features.

Passing from this, which simply gives you a glimpse of what I mean, to the very heart of my theme, I wish to ask you to note this grand fact, true of all the history of human development from the beginning until now,— that every grand event, every grand work, every grand character, every grand position, has been wrought out, has been attained, by dealing with the commonplace materials of the world and infusing them with a soul. The figure of it all we find in the first chapter of Genesis, where Elohim is fabled to have taken a quantity of common dust of the ground and moulded it into the image of man; and the wonder begins when he breathes into it the breath of life, and it becomes human. It is this touch of human history, human interest, the result of human talent, human labor, human patience, dealing with the rough, common materials of the world, that has created all the grandeur and glory of the earth in every direction.

Why do visitors every year go by the hundred and the thousand to stand on the field of Waterloo? It was a very commonplace piece of country, it is a very commonplace piece of country now,— only earth and grass and wheat fields, with nothing remarkable in its scenery. And the struggle that was fought there was commonplace in all its materials and elements, except as we look at it in the light of its outcome. Common human men, with common hopes and common fears, weary, or lifted up and inspired by common passions, ambition, patriotism, hate, anger, underneath the common dust and smoke, their faces streaming with common sweat, like a day laborer at his toil, struggled through that day to the end and made the place famous in all times, simply because Providence, in the air above, held aloft the scales of human destiny which were being decided by this common struggle of common men beneath. And so all places that are grand have won their fame and taken on the mighty significance which they wear.

What are the mightiest works of human genius? Take

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the "Moses" of Michel Angelo,—only a common block of marble, wrought on by human hands, with common tools, until he thought out in his own mind and thought into the stone a human soul, and made it a grand fact for all coming time.

So of great heroisms. There is nothing wonderful about them, except the fact that common human faculties come to a crisis, meet an issue, do it bravely and well, holding out to the end. You remember that famous story—and it cannot be too famous or remembered too long—of those brave common English soldiers, who, when they found their ship was destined to sink, and there was no way of saving all, sent off the women and children, and watched the last boat leave, knowing there was no chance for them, and then, at the word of their officer, drew themselves up in soldierly order with grounded arms, and stood shoulder to shoulder, until they sank into an immortality of heroism. They were just the same kind of men that we are. They only exercised the same quality of truth and devotion that any other men might exercise, that every man does exercise every day in other conditions, in other circumstances.

The grandest positions of the world, the highest heights of fame, have been won, not by a leap. No mountain was ever climbed except inch by inch, over common soil and common grass, common rocks, and by pulling at common roots to sustain one's self in climbing over this obstacle and that. All the great things of the world have been wrought by remoulding the commonplace materials of life, and putting into them something grand and noble.

But the practical question for you and for me is to find out, if we may, how to make something a little higher and a little better of our own commonplace daily lives. I wish to suggest two or three things in this connection. In the first place, I think that all of our homes, all of our careers, seem to us commonplace, because we allow ourselves to be deceived by a cursory and superficial view of things. We need to learn to look below the surface, and find out how wonder-

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ful every thing about this earth is, when we come to understand and learn its meaning.

As a practical illustration of what I mean, take a gardener, a man who, as spring opens, is weeding out the grass along the fences and borders of flower-plots. He is dealing with the commonest of all common materials, those that make up the possibilities of the beautiful growth of his garden. He can do it like a machine, as a piece of animated muscle and bone; he can do it as a piece of task-work, when weary lying down under the shade to rest, when hungry eating, just as the engine takes fuel, to make it capable of going again,—he can do it in this way, or he can do it as a man. Every man, if he will, is capable of looking beneath the grass and the flowers, beneath the surface of the common soil in which he digs, and reading something of the age-long marvel of life. Suppose he takes one of his commonest flowers and asks: Whence does this flower come? How old is it? Is it just now as it was on the first day of creative life on earth? If not, through what transitions, by what changes, has it come? We sometimes are interested in the pedigrees of men; but every rose, every lily, every wayside flower, has a pedigree as marvellous as the most famous dynasty on earth. He who will think and study a little of these common materials of common life shall find himself face to face with an infinite mystery; shall feel like bowing his head and putting off his shoes, with the sense that the spot whereon he stands is holy ground.

And that which is true of the life of the gardener is true of every business. There is something besides using it as a bread-winner. It has a meaning and significance; and, if you will follow its leading, you will find there is a clew there that reaches clear to the heart of the infinite God himself.

But there is another way of doing it, and this perhaps will appeal more directly to you. A man can lead his life selfishly, shut up within his own thought, his own feelings, his own sympathies, pursuing as an end in itself that which ought to be only the means to something higher, or he can

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link the common routine of his life to the happiness and the welfare of some human being, so that this common routine becomes transfigured and glorified. I trust you have all read, and so will all remember, George Eliot's story of Silas Marner. Silas Marner, disappointed and soured by the experience of his early life, becomes a hermit miser. Bitter against all the world, life has no significance for him any longer, except as he can hoard up a little pile of gold as the result of his long toiling, and so put himself beyond the need of depending on, or having anything to do with, humanity from that time forth. Pursuing it as a means of independence at first, he comes at last to pursue it for its own sake; and so every night he takes out the shining coins from under his cabin floor, and his only comfort is in counting it over and over; until one day a human waif, a little girl, is thrown in his way, and this child he adopts as the child of his heart and his care. As the result of it, he comes into contact with humanity once more, and is transfigured through that life, and made a man again. He has something human to love, something noble to live for. For the only way by which man or woman can become human and keep human is by having human welfare as the end of all struggle and toil and existence.

As the contrast to this, take such men as I know, such men as you know (I could point out the moral by the lives of women as well, if I chose). A man who has set out to gain some end, be it a certain amount of money, be it a certain kind of house to live in, be it a certain social position or a political place, whatever it may be that he may choose as an end of his life, if it is not human, if it is not linked with the happiness and the welfare of somebody else, that man will by necessity grow hard. His brain becomes narrowed, his heart beats with a feebler and colder throb, and this one object of his life, being unhuman, shapes him over into the likeness of itself. Yet all the while perhaps he may be fancying he is doing it from kindness to some one he loves. But while granting that he ought to be doing it for the sake of some

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one he loves, that all this is a means to an end, that the highest thing after all is happiness for himself or somebody else, still he becomes so persistently fixed in this one idea that he turns it into a chariot in which he mounts, and, catching the reins, rides on and over and tramples down the very flowers of human hearts and human life and happiness for which he ought to live and that ought to be the end of all his ambitious striving.

I say then that if you wish to transform the commonplace, hard, routine life and make of it something noble, link it with the welfare, the happiness, the life of some one who depends on you and needs your aid. Have a human end as the goal of your ambition, and it will transform your life and make it sweet and tender and human.

Then one step more along the same line of thought, only broadening it a little. These lives of ours are commonplace and poor and mean, because we do not understand how they are related to the broader, universal life of the world. Take a stone mason, and let him be polishing and squaring a block of granite, working it into precisely the shape that is given him as a pattern. If he thinks of that stone only and of no relation that it bears to anything else; if he does not realize that his work bears any relation to a larger result,— no wonder that his life seems very small, contracted, and poor, that it is very humdrum and unpoetic. But if there is enough of an appreciation of a grand idea, enough of the touch of an artist about him, to enable him to think of this stone as a part of a noble cathedral; if he can realize that he is helping to express the thought, the purpose, the plan, of the master mind,— then his little work becomes part of the larger whole, and is no longer petty, narrow, and contracted. He himself is the helper of art, one of the mightiest forces of the world. Or take the feelings of the poorest citizen in the days of Athens' glory. The very humblest walked the streets with a firmer tread, because he could say, I am a citizen of the grandest city in the world. He forgot his little individuality, and became a part of the mighty whole.

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So you business men, if you only come to understand the meaning of commerce, you will find that nothing, not even religion or education, in the ordinary sense of that word, has played a greater part in civilizing the world than has commerce. It has traversed every sea, it has brought nations face to face and made them acquainted with each other. It has established all the means of intercommunication that makes us feel to-day that the whole round planet is one. You may say each to himself, It makes very little difference whether I conduct my particular business accurately, properly, conscientiously or not. If you were the only one, it would not perhaps make a vital difference to the world; but, if this spirit of carelessness and unfaithfulness should become general, there would be a letting down of the world's civilization. In order that it should be keyed up and held to its proper tension, made mighty to hold that which it has gained and strong to gain something more, it is needful that every man be true,—not as one who is merely earning his own bread, but as one who is engaged in that commerce which reaches round the globe and weaves the garment of civilization.

Let me turn to one concrete, personal illustration of what I mean. If you have not read it, I wish you would all get and read the correspondence of Lydia Maria Child. Consider her life, years of it spent out here at Wayland in a little common country house, beside a common country road, herself and husband alone. No wealth, no social position, in the popular sense of that word. The husband splits the kindling wood with his own hand. The wife makes her beds, sweeps her own floors, dusts her own furniture, kneads her own dough and bakes her own bread, lays her own table with her own hands, leading a life in every item commonplace, sheer drudgery as you might say; and yet study the life of that woman, and you will feel that you are in the presence of one of the noblest that ever lived. There is no whining, no complaining, no longing for a different career,—at any rate, no sour longing for it, the kind that makes a

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person sit down disgusted and not do anything, because he cannot do what he wishes to,—but just taking these common materials of the common household life and glorifying them with the touch of her womanhood; for she possessed that kind of womanhood that made her fingers, like the magic fingers of king Midas, able to turn everything she touched to gold. And all the glory and grandeur and significance of her life is simply womanhood, nothing else,— nothing unattainable, nothing beyond the reach of common humanity.

It is customary, as you know, for some ministers to begin their sermons by an exposition of their texts, and then apparently to forget it until they are done. It has been my purpose to pursue just the opposite course. I read my text, but I gave no exegesis of it at the outset, intending not to forget it, but to keep in mind the principle that lies at the heart of it, and then finish with the text, instead of beginning with it. Moses hears the voice, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And yet, just before, Moses had noticed nothing remarkable about the spot. It was the common soil of Arabia, common dust and plants and shrubs and grasses. There was nothing remarkable about it. But, suddenly, he feels conscious of a presence that transforms it all, and the commonplace is glorified. So let me say to you, I care not where you are, whether in the home, in the lawyer's office, going the doctor's daily rounds, in the counting-room, on the sidewalk; "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." For, if it be not holy, it is not the fault of the ground: it is the fault of the man who stands there. There is no common spot that some noble presence, some high thought or purpose, some sacred association, some consecration to human good, may not transform into that which is as sacred as though visited by holy ones from another sphere. If, then, you do not feel that the place where you stand is holy ground, if you have no high motive, no grand purpose, no human aspiration, no desire to consecrate yourself to the welfare of

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others, then open your eyes and look, listen until you hear some higher voice calling. Commit yourself to something true, and you need not journey to any far-off shrine; you need not make a pilgrimage to an altar that has been visited by great events; but the place *where thou standest* shall be holy ground.

Father, let us understand the meaning of these strange lives of ours. Let us know that we are all in the presence-chamber of divinity; and, if some of us are grovelling while some are worshipping, it is not because the divinity is absent, it is only that we do not perceive it. Help us, then, to open our eyes and our hearts to that which is highest, and live devoted to thee. Amen.

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BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MAY 18, 1883. No. 33.

Some Compensations of Agnosticism.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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Some Compensations of Agnosticism.

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"—JOB xi., 7, 8.

AGNOSTICISM is a very modern word. You will find it in only the latest editions of the dictionary. But it is already on the lips of Europe and America. So common and wide-spread a use of the word must indicate a wide-spread phase of thought that needs this new term as a medium of expression. And yet the thing itself is not new. It has only come to a new and more definite consciousness of itself in the modern world, as men are beginning to recognize more clearly the probable limits of human knowledge. The author of Job occupies a distinctly agnostic position; and our text might be taken as the agnostic's motto.

The old poet finds himself face to face with the age-long problem of sorrow. The popular solution of it was found in the assumption that all suffering was a heaven-sent punishment for sin. And, though both the Old Testament and the New distinctly contradict it, there are still plenty of ministers to be found who will tell the heart-broken mother weeping over her dead child that the little one is taken away because she has neglected the prayer-meeting or has not submitted to a theological "conversion." But here is a man whose property is destroyed and whose children are swept away at one stroke of misfortune. At the same time, he is cursed with disease. Only his wife is left; and, since she can find nothing better to do than to taunt him, we are compelled to look upon her as only an added affliction. Satan is too shrewd a

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tormentor to deprive him of that kind of a wife. And yet we are given to understand that the man of Uz was perfect and upright. Affliction, then, is not a theological punishment for sin. The solution of the mystery hinted in the prologue — that God lets the devil torment mankind simply as a test of faithfulness—is morally too revolting to need any refutation. Even the author of Job does not seriously discuss it: it is only a part of the mechanism of his drama. What, then, is the solution of the old poet? Simply that of the agnostic, "I do not know,"— no solution at all. We must submit to the Almighty Power, whose ways are beyond and above us. "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind," and — convinced him of his ignorance, and commanded him to bow in the presence of the infinite mystery.

Agnosticism, then, is old. But, as a distinct and recognized phase of religious thought, it is very new. And, curiously enough, it has come as the result of a vastly increased accumulation of knowledge. Only one more illustration of the grand fact that it takes a wise man to know his own ignorance.

But, before going any further, we need to get clearly in mind just what agnosticism is. As in the case of many other things, there is concerning this a great deal of confusion in the popular thought. Just as the word "infidel" used to be a term flung indiscriminately at the heads of theological opponents, so now the word "agnostic" is coming to be used in a very loose way, as a term of general ecclesiastical opprobrium. If you listen to the wordy battle of the time, you may hear such general sayings as these: "He doesn't believe there is any God: he's an agnostic"; or "He doesn't believe in immortality: he's an agnostic"; or "He holds to the philosophy of materialism: he's an agnostic." The word is thus carelessly used to cover a world of heterogeneous and contradictory positions, as the old geographers used to put down some general name on the map to cover all those parts of the world where guesses took the place of exploration. But the atheist is not an agnostic.

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The atheist says, "There is no God"; while the agnostic only says, "I do not know." He who says, "I am a materialist," thereby affirms his belief that matter is the ultimate fact of the universe, and is capable of explaining it. The agnostic says, "Whether matter is the source of mind, or whether mind is the source of matter, or whether both mind and matter are only phenomenal manifestations of a somewhat above and behind them both, I do not know." If a man says, "There is no future life, death is the end of all," he is not an agnostic. The agnostic only repeats again, "I do not know."

The great problems of the world have always been such as these,—the existence and character of God; the origin of the world; the origin and nature of man; the destiny of man; the origin and the meaning of evil and suffering. These questions have been answered by all sorts of "revelations," "religions," "philosophies," and "sciences." Looking them all over, in the light of modern investigation, the agnostic simply says: "I am compelled to the conclusion that these claimed solutions are no solution at all; that, concerning the most of these great questions, we know nothing, and can know nothing. It is better for us, therefore, to confine our study to humbler and more practical themes." With many of the agnostic's positions I most heartily agree. The one great reason, however, why I am not willing to be called by that name is this. Because we have not yet been able to solve these great problems, it does not seem to me to follow that we never shall be able. I am willing to say, "I do not know"; but I am not willing to say, "I never shall." The world is young yet; and the boy has no right to settle the limits of knowledge for the man.

But, that we may see clearly how and why agnosticism has arisen, we need to go back to notice the condition of human thought during the so-called "ages of faith." Everything was known then; and the world will never be so wise — in its own esteem — again. Let us look over the scheme of the universe a little, and see how definitely everything was settled.

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Everything about God was known, down even to the minutest details. The priesthood and the clergy were perfectly well acquainted with his nature, his character, disposition, plans, and methods of action. Some of them seemed to be admitted to even a sort of vulgar familiarity. So that, as you listened to some prayers and a certain kind of pious talk, you found yourself thinking of King Charles of England and his favorite Buckingham, who felt at liberty to slap the king on the shoulder like a boon companion. God had lived in perfect blessedness from all eternity; and as — according to some writers — there were three of him, in such a sense that the three could converse together and admire one another's perfections, he was never lonely. But, at last, in accordance with a plan that had always been cherished, he determined to make the world.

And it was known just when and how precisely this world was made. God began to work on Sunday morning, five thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven years ago. It took him just six days to get through, so that he finished on Friday night. On Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, he rested, looked over the work, and declared himself satisfied.

But Satan, who just before had led a third part of all the angels into rebellion, and with them had been cast down into hell, then prepared for their reception, now seeks out the new-made earth, and destroys the just perfected creation. But, though God curses the fallen man and the corrupted earth, it turns out that he is not at all disappointed; for sin and hell were a part of his original plan. The apple and the serpent were all arranged for beforehand.

Ages before the world was created, the three persons of the trinity had held a council, and settled on a "plan of salvation." In accordance with this, four thousand and four years after the creation, one person of the trinity is begotten on the body of a virgin by another person of the trinity, in order that the other, the first, person of this same trinity might be able to save a few — "the elect" — out of the multitude of mankind, to fill up the vacancy in heaven caused by the angelic revolt.

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When the requisite number had been saved, then the world, which had been created only for this purpose, was to be burned up, and only heaven and hell remain. All this had for its sole object only the display of God's glory. And, as wrath and theological "justice" are a part of God's character, the fires of hell must burn to cast its illumination on these, while the light of heaven displays his love and mercy. One would suppose that the "justice" might find material enough for its adequate display in a third of the original inhabitants of heaven; but no, the majority of his earthly children must also feed the flames of the infinite anger.

Such, in brief outline, is the scheme of creation, the character of God, the plan of universal history, and the destiny of man. The famous Jonathan Edwards knew it all, and wrote it all out in his *God's Last End in the Creation of the World.* All this was fixed and settled knowledge, grounded on the best of all possible authority, an infallible, divine revelation. These things were not open to question or argument: only infidels doubted; and this doubt was a sin deserving damnation. All that man was at liberty to do was to study and admire this plan, and help on its fulfilment. And the highest pitch of virtue was attained when a man admired the plan so much that he was willing to be damned, if need be, to assist in carrying it out. The highest argument was "God's will." This settled all mystery, and ended all discussion.

But the renaissance came in the birth of modern science. Man had known everything, the eternal past and the eternal future. He had known everything but one,—*his own ignorance.* And that he was about to learn. As the fruit of this was born human wisdom, at first a little child. And, even now, it is only in its early youth. But, like the baby Jupiter, it showed itself a giant in its cradle; and it promises to become the subduer of the earth and the saviour of men. Let us note a few steps of man's progress in unlearning the supposed universal knowledge of his past.

The earth had been fixed as the centre of the universe.

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All things else moved around it and existed for it. The new astronomy came, unfixed it from its eternal foundations, and sent it, a little, wandering planet, spinning round the sun. The snug, compact little system is gone, its spherey walls have been broken through, and we are wanderers in infinity. Coupled with the wonder of what we know is the vastly greater wonder of what we do not know and can never hope to discover. Wider knowledge only means wider ignorance. And he who knows to how great an extent he must call himself an agnostic is the wisest of all. Conceive yourself standing on a mountain summit some foggy morning. You can see only a few yards about your feet. Slowly, the fog lifts, and the circle about you widens. By and by, other peaks are visible: you look into deep valleys, you trace winding rivers, you catch sight of distant towns; and, far away, the sun glances on the wrinkled surface of the sea. But, as the circle of the visible and known widens and widens, ever beyond it there stretches the still wider circle of the invisible and the unknown. So the progress of knowledge is also, and of necessity, a progress of the sense of one's ignorance.

We now know that this little solar system of ours is a tiny cluster by itself away off in almost infinite isolation. A little fleet of yachts alone in the middle of the Atlantic, with no life or movement nearer than the far-off shores, would not be so all alone as we in the pathless ocean of empty space. Light travels from the sun to the earth in about eight minutes, a distance of over ninety-two millions of miles. But after leaving our system in search of the nearest globe beyond us, our next door neighbor, at a speed which leaves the lightning far behind, it must journey three years and a half across the awful silence before it can clasp hand with our nearest relation. And these stars, separated by these incomprehensible distances, are millions. And concerning this infinite beyond we know almost nothing.

In the face of all this, how shallow and flippant seems that stupidly ignorant knowingness that thinks it carries the universe and all God's ways in its pocket! But the little frag-

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ment of what we know is so much grander than all we thought we knew before, that it is like leaving a little cave that one born in it had taken for the world, and coming out into the sunlight, climbing a mountain top, and seeing the boundless landscape at one's feet.

And the God we thought we knew so well has turned out to be only a sort of "spectre of the Brocken," the observer's own shadow cast upon the changing mists. And, as we think of the vast and incomprehensible power that swings the age-long circuit of the most distant star, that whirls the mote in the sunbeam and globes every drop of dew, we can only take up the burden of the old, awe-stricken poet, and exclaim: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven";—and how high that is to-day!—"what canst thou do? deeper than the abyss; what canst thou know?" We can indeed read a little of his laws and ways: there is light enough for our daily path. But he is no longer the wise worshipper who talks about God's plans as if he lived in the next street. It is rather he who, comprehending the infinite reaches of the unknown, thinks and is silent. The wise man has learned at last to say frankly, "I do not know."

But, in comparison with what was supposed to be known about God, our very ignorance to-day is like the shade of palm trees, and the refreshing oasis waters to one who for hours has wandered over burning sands, dizzy and faint with too oppressive a glare of light. Even doubt comes to us with the voice of hope; and she broods over us as with a sheltering angel's wing, whispering to us some glad and grateful things that at least we need *not* believe any longer. If we cannot know just what God is, we can now bravely believe that he is not what the Church has said he was. He is not a selfish egotist, planning our fall and ruin "for his own glory." He is not capricious and partial and unjust. At any rate, we are dealing with regular, orderly, universal forces, whose laws we can study and whose movements we can count on. So even the agnostic's extremest position—

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which, however, I do not hold—is unspeakably better and more comforting than all the "knowledge" of the old creeds.

We do not know so much about ourselves as we thought we did. "Know thyself," said the old Greek sage. But each man's own being is still an unsounded abyss, that the longest plummet-line has never fathomed. Is mind the product of matter? Is matter the product of mind? Are both the product of something else? Are both eternal and only in some mysterious way combined? Is man naturally immortal? Or is immortality something to be achieved by virtuous effort? Or is this life all? These are some of the qnestions still in debate. Whence did he come? Has he always been man, or is he developed from some lower form of life? What is life? How long has it inhabited this planet? All these are problems which men still discuss.

But, in the midst of all this ignorance, we have wrought out by experience a knowledge of right and wrong, of how to live so as to attain something of good and happiness. But, after all, how blessed is this ignorance, as compared with what we thought we knew! At least, this we may hope, —we are no longer mere kindling wood for the fires of perdition. When we bend over the dead faces of those we have clasped in our arms, we need no longer fear that they are longing for our very teardrops to cool the burning of their flames. The very worst is—silence and sleep. While, beyond the sleep, hope sees a morning, and above the silence rises a whisper of promise.

As was intimated at the outset, they used to "know" what all our sorrows and afflictions were for. They were judgments on our sins, punishments for worldliness, for loving our friends or children too well, to wean us from life and make us willing to die. We only know now that pain and evil come as the result of broken law, and that some degree of them seems inseparable from conscious existence. If we are wise, we no longer talk very confidently about why God sends death into one home and not in another. Those who think carefully, and speak as they think, are about done

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saying, "I don't understand why I should be singled out to bear these burdens." We rather learn to recognize that life and pain and death are all under law. We try to learn these laws, and so regulate our lives as to make the forces of nature help us as much and hurt us as little as possible.

And to me, at least, this is all a blessed gain. We know that the best often suffer the most, because, perhaps, of inherited ills or circumstances they cannot control. So that the theory of divine correction does not apply. It only makes the perplexity deeper, and the pain harder to bear. It is difficult to submit to arbitrary infliction: it is much easier to be patient under the inevitable, when one may trust that the general order is working out a general good. To make man suffer here, and then send him to hell at last,—this is work fit only for imaginary fiends. As Tennyson says,—

> "Better our dead earth mother, who never has heard us groan,"

than a father such as theology has painted for us. If evil and needless pain are the results of ignorance concerning the conditions of life, then we may hope gradually to learn how to eliminate them and leave them behind. But, if they are arbitrary inflictions, then there may never be an end of them.

The birth of modern knowledge then, which at the same time has been a revelation of our ignorance, while it has taken away so many certainties, has left behind some blessed compensations. Modern science is regarded by many as a sort of Pandora's Box, on the opening of which all the blessings of earth have taken flight. But, as in the old fable, hope is left. And this one hope — grounded in an orderly universe and the growing powers of man — is infinitely more comforting than all the old theological certainties. For each hope then was balanced and overshadowed by a darker doom.

Has the world, then, lost in knowledge? Socrates used to say, "The principal difference between me and other men

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is this: they, while really ignorant, are deluded by the fancy that they are wise; while I, being also ignorant, have learned enough to know that I do not know." This is the beginning of wisdom. And, if we have learned as much as this, we may take courage at the thought that at least we have made a beginning, are learning to spell out the alphabet.

But, after we have waked up from our dreams of wisdom, rubbed our eyes clear, and have begun to see, let us beware of those who would send us back to sleep and dream again by putting over our eyes a bandage labelled "faith"; so persuading us that all we have unlearned is true once more. I was told not long ago by a Catholic priest that, were it not for his "faith," he should at once accept my position. But what does he mean by faith? Certainly not that grand, rational faculty that, standing on the basis of past experience, anticipates the probable future as real, and so strives to work out the coming results of a higher civilization. This is one of the grandest powers of man. But the faith that does duty in the pulpit as a substitute for knowledge is only an unreasoning credulity, an "open your mouth and shut your eyes" game, such as only children play. Dean Mansell, after outlining *The Limits of Religious Thought*, and proving, to his own satisfaction, that neither he nor anybody else knew, or could know, anything about these great themes to which I have been referring, suddenly turns round and demands that, *because we know nothing*, we shall *believe everything* as a matter of faith. This is sheer insult to the intellect and a stultification of manhood. If we know but little, let us own it frankly. Let us begin where we stand, and be sure of the little circle of light around our own feet. Then, let us work out from this as fast and as far as we can. To be honest with ourselves, and make sure of each step, is the only way by which we can safely advance.

And, if we live our years all out and feel we know but little, let us take comfort at the thought that it is because the universe is so vast. Surely, if we could know it all and get through, it would be the reading of our own death war-

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rants. Only endless *ennui* would remain for us, and any hope of immortality would be absurd. I dare to hope for a future life only because I know that, when a friend dies, he has loosed from his anchorage, and drifted down the stream, and out on an ocean that has no ultimate shores. I know he *may* sail forever, still watching new headlands rise out of the sea and new constellations look down from unfamiliar skies, and still have boundless room to sail on and on. Could he ever get through, an endless voyage were a contradiction. And, in a universe where one can never get through, the unknown must forever outreach the known.

So much of agnosticism then as is legitimate is no strange or unnatural growth. We ought not to be discouraged to find out how much we do not know. It only means that the universe is unspeakably vaster than we had supposed. And every new confession of ignorance is but one more step in the process of unlearning a supposed system of truth that has lain like a nightmare upon the heart of the world. To doubt that God is egotistic and partial and cruel, to doubt that man is an undeveloped fiend, to doubt that his destiny is a horrible disaster or only a selfish escape, such doubts as these are only the reverse sides of glorious hopes. If the fruit of the supposed "tree of knowledge" has been so bitter, then blessed is the tree of ignorance whose leaves are healing and peace!

As the mists of superstition have lifted, farther away than ever looks the horizon of knowledge that we once hoped to measure and comprehend. Many a great problem must wait for solution. But, meantime, it is light enough just about us so that we can take the next step; and above us the stars are shining, telling us that beyond the farthest reach of investigation still it is light.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

SERMONS OF M. J. SAVAGE.

VOL. 4. MAY 25, 1883. No. 34.

What the Church of the Unity Stands For.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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What the Church of the Unity Stands For.

"We also believe."—II. Cor. iv., 13.

It has been common in all ages for the members of religious communions to refer to those who have dared to dissent from their fundamental doctrines as "unbelievers." They are "the kingdom of heaven"; and, if one is not of their number, he must be in the "outer darkness." They quietly assume that they have all the truth there is; and, if one does not believe as they do, they take it for granted that he does not believe anything. And, sometimes, one hardly knows whether he ought to resent the supercilious impudence as an insult, to pity the narrowness of the ignorance thus displayed, or to smile at the Pharisaic self-conceit.

Because Unitarians have not been willing to tie themselves to a creed, to pledge themselves never to discover a new truth, or, if they did, not to accept it, they are commonly charged with having no creed at all. Perhaps this kind of misrepresentation is not to be wondered at. It seems particularly hard for a self-satisfied Christian to do any sort of justice to one who does not agree with him. But what is really sad about it to me is to see liberals themselves help on this sort of misunderstanding. In his witty "Fable for Critics," Lowell hits off the Unitarians of his day as they stood related to Theodore Parker; and, concerning their creed, he says,—

> "They believed — faith, I'm puzzled — I think I may call
> Their belief a believing in nothing at all,
> Or something of that sort; I know they all went
> For a general union of total dissent."

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And Parker he speaks of as having gone a step farther yet. But, at the same time, he speaks of Parker in terms of unqualified praise, and contradicts his own pleasantry by saying,—

> "Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced
> In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest."

Now, he who understands human nature knows right well that no sane man ever gets in red-hot earnest about — nothing. And Parker, like all great apostles of truth, moved his age as he did, not by his doubts alone, but because he believed more than any other man of his time.

Lowell's wit is good, as wit; and he meant it only as a "sly dig." If it be taken as anything more than that, if Unitarianism is capable of wearing any such definition, then I am not a Unitarian.

But there are those among us who thoughtlessly give countenance to this sort of folly. Not long ago, I heard of a young lady who, when asked her religious faith, said,— half jestingly, to be sure,—"Oh, I go where they don't believe anything in particular." Another one once remarked to me, "When people ask me what Unitarians believe, I really don't know what to tell them." And, quite recently, a lady said to me, "I fight a good many battles for you: people often tell me that Mr. Savage doesn't believe anything."

Now, if it be really possible that people hear me preach and go away thinking I do not believe anything, either I speak with very little clearness, or else they listen with very little reflection. For certain it is that I never in my whole life believed so much as I do to-day. I never held so large, so grand, so hopeful, so stimulating a faith. And if anybody goes through the form of listening to me, and thinks otherwise, I cannot think it is my fault. For I dare to say that no man in America, during the last ten years, has given utterance to a more detailed and more positive system of religious belief than is contained in my published books. If people have read these or even a part of them, and have not found it, I must believe that they read to little purpose.

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And if they have not read, and still say, "Mr. Savage believes nothing," then they state what they ought to know is untrue. But, then, some people listen in such a curious fashion! And, on the other hand, those who are too much prejudiced either to hear or read are still very positive in their assertions, and quite ready to report their ignorant prejudices for facts.

An illustration of this sort of thing is worth giving. It shows a kind of charity and truth that, ever since the day when Jesus was popularly reported to be a glutton, a wine-bibber, and a companion of low people, have been too common among those who have claimed to be his followers. Not long since, a woman — disguised and dressed as a lady — was overheard, on a street-car, telling what dreadful things were preached in this church, and warning a young friend against being inveigled into attending such a place. But, when pressed with the innocent question as to whether she had ever read or heard me, she replied, with a sort of holy horror, that she never had. She had that kind of piety that enables its possessor heartily to despise those who do not belong to their synagogue, but which does not prevent one from lying about what one does not take the trouble to understand.

But now let us look a little more closely, and see what all this talk about not believing anything really means. From the stand-point of the bigot, it only means, "You don't believe as I do." With a great many young people, it is only careless, thoughtless talk. They do believe a great deal, only they have not taken the trouble to formulate it, and put it into definite statement. Or, allowing the creeds of others to define religion, they say, "Well, then, if that is religion, I suppose I haven't any." So they sit down quietly and wear the title of "unbeliever," when they ought to resent it as an insult,— no less insulting because it is the well-meant, pious cant of those who arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to be called "the people of God." I, for one, do not propose to take quietly the arrogant compassion of those who

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mistake last year's ignorance for piety, and who think the dead branch of last fall has a right to pity the restless bud of spring.

It is not to be wondered at, if, in view of the vast expansion of the universe, the unsettling of old theories, the sudden uncovering of an infinite beyond in every direction that baffles imagination even, the painfully felt inadequacy of all the old schemes and systems,—it is not, I say, to be wondered at, if people do feel that they know very little, and for the time hardly know what to believe. All this, however, is not because the awakened modern mind believes less than was believed in former times; for, in fact, it believes a great deal more. It is only that what is known seems so very little as compared with the endless vistas of the unexplored. When Newton spoke of himself as a little child picking up now and then a brighter pebble than usual on the seashore while the infinite ocean of truth lay all unknown before him, it was not that the great scientist knew less than his predecessors: it was only because he knew so much that he could comprehend how much he did not know.

The liberal religionist has been called a "doubter" and "unbeliever" so long that he is half ready to admit that these titles really belong to him. And his opponents have so long and so loudly claimed to be "men of faith" that people are half persuaded to admit the claim. But I, for one, am not ready to confess that either of these positions is true. *The Church of the Unity, so far as I have a right to represent it, believes more truth and grander truth than is contained in any one of the old creeds; and its faith is deeper and higher and more comprehensive than that of any one of the religions of the past.*

This claim I wish now to substantiate as definitely as possible by outlining a series of contrasts between the main points of the orthodox creed and our own. When I am done, I trust you will see plainly that henceforth no enemy can honestly charge, and no friend can intelligently admit, that we do not believe as much and as positively and definitely as any church in existence. As the most effective way of making

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this apparent, I will state the points of the old faith that we do not believe, and then in sharp contrast will set down what we do believe, asking you meanwhile to consider whether our positions are not quite as positive and quite as religious as the others.

1. We do *not* believe that the world was created in six days six thousand years ago. Neither do we believe in the attempts to get over the difficulties of Genesis by making days mean long periods of time. But we *do* believe that the earth has been in existence for millions of years; and that, by slow and wondrous processes of growth, it has come to be what we see it to-day. And, instead of holding the pessimistic and despairing belief that it is accursed and blighted, we believe that the same marvellous processes of development and improvement that have been at work in the past are at work still. So we cherish the hope that man's wondrous dwelling-place is to be better and better still in the future.

Which is the larger, broader belief? Which is, by comparison, the negative one? Which is the most honorable, hopeful, and, in the best sense, religious?

2. We do *not* believe in the "fall of man." But we *do* believe in the ascent of man. We believe that, beginning at the lowest point that could be called human, he has ascended by the toilsome pathway of experience, until, from the sun-bright summits of his present civilization, he can look back and down, and trace the winding, blood-stained, tear-wet way by which he has come. Imperfection and sorrow and evil find a more natural, and far more hopeful an explanation in the latter theory than they do in the old. The moral sense of the nineteenth century declares the old doctrine to be immoral and unjust, unworthy of God, and cruel to man.

Again, which belief is the more positive, the more nobly religious? Where are the "pale negations," where the doubt and denial in this our position?

3. It is contained, by implication, in our last statement that we do *not* believe in "total depravity." Neither do we

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believe that man is an angel. We do not make an ideal man out of a preconceived theory of either goodness or badness. We simply *go to the facts*, and take him for what he is. And we find that, along with fearful capacities for evil, he has in him also limitless possibilities of good. And we find that the good is more and stronger than the evil, as is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the world has been and is growing better. Thus, hope is ever stronger than despair; and we work with courage, having our Eden before us as the goal of our attainment, and not behind us as the object of perpetual regret.

Can the old statement be called belief and assertion, and the new one doubt and denial? Rather is it true that the canker of doubt and denial eats forever at the heart of the old, while ours is fresh and strong with courage and trust.

4. We do *not* believe that God was miraculously incarnated, once for all, in one man only, and that nearly two thousand years ago. But we *do* believe that he is eternally incarnated in all that is good and beautiful and true. All light, all love, all life, all beauty, are the present Deity. At every turn, God faces us. "He besets us behind and before, and lays his hand upon us." He is nearer to us than our pulse-beats or than the most secret thoughts of our hearts. God was not simply at the beginning, when he breathed into Adam the breath of life, but in all life, ever reaching upward; not simply in the miraculous bush of Moses, but in every wayside shrub, the bursting of spring buds, and the woods of October all aflame with glory; not simply giving the stars their first impulse, but holding their poise and guiding their boundless orbits to-day; not speaking now and then to "holy men of old," but always speaking to him who "hath ears to hear," and always revealed to the "pure in heart."

Which of these positions is the more religious? The one is a pagan notion, shared by Christianity with half, at least, of the old crude and superstitious religions of the world's ignorant childhood. The other is the grandest and highest

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thought of the noblest, most reverent, most intelligent age of the world. The old is petty and dwarfed in the comparison; and it denies an unspeakably larger truth than that which it affirms.

5. Of course, it follows from our position concerning the doctrines of man and the incarnation that we do *not* believe in either the fact of or the necessity for the atonement. But we *do* believe in the infinitely more honorable and hopeful views that Jesus taught in the parable of "The Prodigal Son,"—that God is always ready to receive all who come to him, and the gateway of improvement is never shut. The theology that turns God's altar into a slaughter-house, and pictures him as demanding a victim before he can help his own children,—this, we regard as an appropriate product of barbarism, and only fit to be left in possession of the people whose cruelty and ignorance were capable of inventing it.

But to call the old view an affirmation and the other a denial is a travesty on all sensible uses of language. Every affirmation denies that which is inconsistent with it, and every denial affirms. But ours is unspeakably the larger, the more positive, the more hopefully religious view.

6. We do *not* believe in the old heaven and the old hell as the finished and permanent terminus of a brief probation here on earth, as places where fixed characters are to be forever happy or forever miserable. But we *do* believe in the law of cause and effect, that "as a man soweth so shall he also reap"; that this law holds in this world and in all worlds, that it has always held in the past and will always hold in the future. We believe that heaven is the music of well-ordered lives and of harmoniously developed characters, and that hell is the shadow of one's own deeds that forever follows and treads on the heels of wrong. But we also believe that always, before the feet of the farthest wanderer, is the lower end of a ladder that leads up to the highest possibilities of good. Nay, more, we believe that every soul is "doomed to be saved"; that wrong is always folly

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and sorrow; that the inexorable God will scourge with merciful punishment all the law-breakers of the universe, until they learn that only the right is the happy.

For any one, then, to characterize our doctrines of salvation and retribution as loose, or as savoring of doubt or denial or negation, is either culpable ignorance or culpable misstatement. They are as much more positive and grand than the old as light is grander than darkness, as love is higher than hate, as life is better than death.

7. We do not believe that the Bible is a perfect divine revelation of truth. But we *do* believe that man has a perfect revelation of all necessary truth, just as fast and as far as his experience discovers and verifies it. We reject the unworthy idea that God is partial, sending his light to only one little fragment of humanity and leaving all the rest to perish; and we believe that his light shines on all nations, and that its reception is only limited by human capacity.

Which doctrine is the more worthy of God and the more hopeful for man? We affirm the larger truth; and those who hold the old view, born of conceit and ignorance, are the ones who deny, in order to defend their narrower creed.

8. We do *not* believe that religion is essentially in any one set of statements, or in any one kind of church organization, or in any ritual or ceremony or priestly vestments. These seem to us to be even flippant impertinences, when, as is often the case, they are clung to and emphasized, while the real truth is scouted, and love and character and charity are put down into a secondary place. But we *do* believe that character is the very heart of religion, and that truth is her high priest. And we hold that all institutions and ordinances and vestments and ceremonials are to religion only what clothes and houses and external manners are to men. These outward things are well, if not substituted for life; but they were made for man, and not man for them. And there is constant danger that, intrenched in ordinances, decorated by vestments, and absorbed in rituals, people shall fancy that they are very religious, while they treat with super-

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cilious and self-righteous contempt persons so much more truly godlike than themselves that they are not worthy to unloose the latchets of their shoes.

Here, then, are the outlines of a definite, positive creed. It not only matches the old one at every point, but is larger and clearer. The old one is only traditional, and is largely discredited and disproved: the new one is in accord with the best knowledge of the world. The old is pessimistic and full of despair: the new is hopeful and brave. If you say that the new one is negative, in that it denies the old, you must also say that the old one is negative, in that it denies the new. Each affirms itself and denies the other; but, as the new is the larger, grander, and more hopeful of the two, it is only fair to say that the old one denies the most, and so is the most negative, and carries with it the least of positive affirmation.

I think then that I am fully justified in saying that there is to-day no church on earth that stands for a more definite, positive, hopeful, helpful religious creed than does this Church of the Unity. Of course, it takes some time for new ideas to become habituated to the brain so that they feel at home, and for new sentiments to become domesticated in the heart. But this statement is no whit truer of the ideas we hold than it was of the old ideas when they were new. And, if the world is ever to grow any wiser and better, we must teach ourselves to be hospitable to new truth, to open wide our doors, give it cordial welcome, and make it a warm place by our firesides.

There remain two or three supplementary points that I must outline briefly, in order to complete the fitting treatment of my theme.

One curious error yet lingers, and, with a shadowy sort of sovereignty, still dominates the public mind. This is the general notion, that it is meritorious to believe, and that to doubt borders, at least, on the sinful. To the Church, the two words, unbeliever and sinner, mean about the same thing. It is no wonder that this notion is in the air, because

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for centuries the Church has regarded heresy as the blackest of all crimes. Murder, adultery, theft, lying,— these could be condoned and pardoned. But unbelief cut one off from both human and divine mercy. Of course, the Church, as an organized institution, was thus acting only in self-defence. Doubt was treason to the power of the priesthood. The error lay in making herself the mistress instead of the servant of man. Thomas has always been held up to reprobation because he asked for evidence before he could believe. Always has the Church claimed to hold the keys, and to say, "Believe, and I will open for you the gates of heaven; doubt, and there waits for you only the outer darkness of hell." It is no wonder then, I say, that men have come to fear doubt and to commend faith, and to do both with little care or discrimination.

But, in the modern world, another spirit is abroad. We have come to think the discovery of truth the highest end of life. And we have learned that truth can be found only as the result of careful search, of trial and verification. Too ready credulity, then, is an evil. It accepts a guess or an unproved assertion, and so hinders that thorough investi gation that penetrates to the heart of things and compels them to give up their secrets. We have therefore taken doubt out of the category of vices, and crowned it as one of the cardinal virtues. The whole matter hinges on the question of proof. It is a virtue to doubt what is not proven, as much as to believe what is. For truth is the end, and both doubt and belief are of value only as means toward its attainment.

Credulity has been one of the great curses of the world. For what age-long wastes of money and time and effort and tears and blood has it not been responsible! The one thing that humanity needs to-day, more than anything else, is a disposition to seek for the truth of things. An easy-going credulity, misnamed "faith," has done more harm to man than all the doubt and denial of all the ages.

There are, indeed, doubts and beliefs that spring out of

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moral dispositions and biases. Men believe because they want to, and doubt for no better reason. All this, of course, is wrong. But I dare affirm that to-day there is quite as much of this inside the churches as there is out. So that a recognition of it does not at all affect our general position.

I have not, then, throughout the body of my sermon, defended the quantity or quality of our belief, because I think it is wrong to doubt. An honest man, when he has put weights into both sides of a pair of scales, must doubt that the side which goes up is as heavy as the side which goes down. And the same principle holds when his scales are of the mind, and his weights are observations and impressions.

Prove all things then, and hold fast to that which stands the test and is demonstrated to be good. Doubt is no place for rest. Neither, for that matter, is mere belief. When, through the agency of both, you have found the truth, then act it and live it; for that is the one end that justifies all research.

One point more we need particularly to remember. Men talk about the "unsettling of beliefs," until they get the impression that there is really serious doubt concerning the great practical questions of conduct and human life. But we cannot be too often reminded that this is not true. The matters in dispute are not such as need to hinder a man in doing his duty. Grant that we can never know any more about any one of these things than we do to-day, still every field of noble human achievement lies open, and along every pathway spring the fragrant blossoms of joy.

Consider for just one moment. Suppose we should never find out what God was thinking about during the eternity past, this doubt need not stand in the way of your being a good citizen. And your doing this is much more important than the satisfaction of your curiosity about the infinite. Suppose the pulpits should never agree as to the doctrine of inspiration, that need not hinder your being an honest business man. And the welfare of the world is much more concerned

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in your fair dealing than it is in your opinions about David. Suppose you continue to doubt whether the original home of man was in Eden or in the jungle, at least you can see to it that your own home is sweet and sunny and restful. A present Eden is a vast deal more important than any question about a past one. If you cannot settle, to your own satisfaction, where you will be and what you will be doing in a thousand years, you can see to it that you are in the right place and are doing the right thing to-day. When I see people worrying so much about being saved in the future, I sometimes wonder if they are not overlooking the somewhat more important matter of seeing to it that they make themselves worth saving.

By the long experience of the past, the human race has already wrought out a knowledge of right and wrong and the conditions of happiness. Of course, all these will be improved as the years go by. But we already know enough, so that we need not fold our hands and sit still, while theological doctors fight over what perhaps none of them know or ever will know. You can see enough to do right yourselves and to help your fellow-men to-day.

Here, then, the Church of the Unity stands. It holds that the great practical questions of duty are clear. It holds that an open and free search for truth, for the sake of human well-being and happiness, is a universal human obligation. To this end, it holds that doubt of the unproved is a duty equally with the acceptance of that which is known to be true. And it holds to a creed clear and definite and positive concerning all the great questions of human life. And this creed it stands ready to improve, to curtail, to enlarge, to modify just as fast and as far as newly discovered truth shall warrant it. And, above and beyond all, it holds that each man's first and last duty is to live as well as he can himself, and do what he can to make the world a little cleaner, brighter, easier, and happier for others. And, if anybody is lost in the future, we feel perfectly sure it will *not* be that kind of a man.

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Published weekly. Price, $1.50 a year, or six cents single copy

UNITY PULPIT,

BOSTON.

VOL. 4. JUNE 1, 1883. No. 35.

Hebrew Faith and Modern Facts.

BY

WILLIAM J. POTTER.

BOSTON:
GEORGE H. ELLIS, 141 FRANKLIN STREET.
1883.

Entered at the Post-office, Boston, Mass., as second-class mail matter.

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NINE YEARS OF A MODERN MINISTRY.

NINE years ago to-day, I stood in this place for the first time. I had come from my home in Chicago to speak at some of the meetings of Anniversary Week, and filled this pulpit one Sunday morning only as a casual supply. I was not preaching as a candidate. I have never done that but once, and never mean to do it again. The result of it was, however, that, in the September following, I came to stay. It is probable that on the anniversary of that September Sunday the church will not have opened for its autumn work. I propose, therefore, to make to-day the occasion, first, for some words suggested by a backward look; and, secondly, for a sort of home talk on the position and work of the modern minister.

This theme will give me an opportunity for saying many things which I often think and feel, but which I cannot often speak of with propriety. And perhaps I may hope that, in their published form, these words may be of service to other ministers and other congregations. To the attainment of any worthy success in the modern ministry, there must be between minister and people a large sympathy and a hearty mutual co-operation. And, to this end, it is not only necessary that the minister should understand his people, but also that the people should understand the position and work of the minister. The minister is frequently told that he ought to know the people, their business, their labors, their anxieties, their temptations, the conditions of their life, so that he may render them appropriate and efficient service. All this is granted. But, on the other hand, I wish to say that the

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touches and controls men because there is that within them which responds to the larger incarnation of these qualities which are common to all mankind.

Were it otherwise, the world's great men would only discourage, not inspire us. We shout back our responsive applause to the orator, because he has put our own undefined thoughts into words, and voiced for us the emotions we could not utter. We call the painter great when he puts on his canvas the ideal forms of which we could only dream. And the leader, on fields of battle or in realms of thought, is he who can hew out the victorious pathway along which our slower feet may tread.

The hero, then, is only the common man writ large. He is our brother and king in one; and king because brother. As we look at the great, we contemplate that the germ of which is in us all. So they become our exemplars and inspirations.

A peculiar kind of immortality is accorded to the great. Longfellow says: —

> Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time.

But there is more poetry than truth in the statement. The most of us can never hope to "make our lives sublime" in the ordinary sense of that word. It is true that the valley may be made of the same materials as the mountain; but it is the bulk and elevation of the latter that make it sublime. And it is a question as to whether many of us will leave any "footprints on the sands of time" that those coming after us will ever notice. It is indeed true that each one of us must help make the future; but, in most cases, our particular contribution will never be picked out of the general result. A rain-drop falls on the smooth sand of the seashore, or a bird leaves the tiny track of its passing foot. If the conditions happen to be right, the geologist, after ten thousand years, reads the impression as plain as the day on

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which it was made. But, in most cases, the next tide washes it away. Our little lives help make the future; but only an infinite intelligence can trace our special work.

But the great impressions of the world's heroes are not so easily obliterated. The striking events of our lives we remember. The world's corporate memory we call history. The world, then, remembers her great ones. And these — who else would be only names — imagination is able to furnish with body and presence, so that over them death has no power. Many are these great dead, who still are more alive than most who walk our streets. The mightiest ones of the earth are the invisible ones. Jesus was never more alive than to-day, though he is undoing a large part of the work that smaller men have zealously done in his name. When Theodore Parker was dying, he said: "There are two Theodore Parkers now. One is dying here in Italy. The other, I have planted in America. He will live there, and finish my work." As General of the army or as President of the United States, Washington was not nearly so alive as he is to-day. And Lincoln becomes more vital every year. The great ones go away in the flesh, only to come back as universal presences. Boston is what it is in American life not merely because of us who now live in its houses and carry on its business, but chiefly because of the heroic dead who still write in its shadowy rooms, speak from its shadowy platforms, and draw their shadowy swords on its now silent battle-fields. We, in our hundred years of national life, have thought, have educated, have voted, have fought under their invisible leadership. However independently we may henceforth move, our orbit can never be the same as it would have been but for their attraction. The impulse of Adams and Otis and Warren is still felt controlling our career. We work with Concord and Bunker Hill for our background; and forever they must be a part of our life.

There are two theories as to the relation of great men to the common mass,— one, that they are causes, the other, that they are results. One would say that the great man

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makes the epoch that he represents; the other, that the epoch makes the great man. Did Washington make the Revolution, or did the Revolution make Washington? He who writes history on the one theory thinks he has told the whole when he records the words and deeds of kings, captains, diplomatists. He who writes it on the other treats questions of race, soil, climate, food, the religion, education, and general characteristics of the people. One would make Lincoln, Stanton, and Grant the prime forces in our great war; the other would treat of the character and tendencies of the people, and are ready to declare that, if these men had never lived, the mighty purpose of the people would have found or created other Lincolns and Grants, through whom to give expression to the popular will.

The same question comes up in regard to any great religion, as Christianity, for example. Did Jesus make Christianity, or did the great human movement of that age seize upon the person of Jesus as the representative of a force and tendency that, had there been no son of Mary, would have found some other name to emblazon on its banner?

Doubtless, both of these theories contain a truth that cannot be overlooked. Bunker Hill was fought when it was, because the ready people had ready leaders. But had the leaders then been lacking, the Revolution would only have been postponed, or come in some other way. Great men are both products and makers of their age.

And this leads us to notice two things that ought not to be forgotten. They should be remembered, because they contain lessons for us who are not great. The first of these two points is this,— great men are never produced except by a people who contain the elements of that greatness. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. Nothing comes out of a soil except what is in it. And, since in this broad, national sense, you and I are a part of the soil, we have something to do with the question as to whether our country shall be capable of producing men who are religiously, morally, politically great. The kind of char-

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acteristics and tendencies which we cultivate and cherish help constitute the general conditions which determine the national product of leaders.

At our autumnal cattle-shows and fairs the popular taste determines that the premiums shall be awarded to certain breeds of cattle, and to certain types of vegetable product. As a perfectly natural result, these breeds and types will be more largely cultivated another year. So what kind of men shall come to the front as State and national leaders is determined by the personal qualities, the kinds of ability to which we award the premium of our popular approbation.

The other truth is this: When great men do appear, their power is determined and limited by the character of the common people. A clear head is worth very little without a strong arm. The greatest general is no mightier than the quality and numbers of his army enable him to be. The mightiest religious leader is weak unless there be that in the hearts of his followers that is capable of responding to the loftiness of his appeal. Ole Bull could get no music out of a broken violin, nor out of a whole one made of an unresonant material. Mighty religious reformers came before Luther, but Europe was not ready to listen. Luther was great because, at last, the people were ready to hear and follow him.

If, then, we wish our age to be great in music, in art, in poetry, in statesmanship, we must do what we can to make the popular pulse respond to the best things in all these directions. Jesus once complained of this lack of responsiveness on the part of his hearers: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." So if the men of this age wish the best thought and the highest ideals to prevail in religion, they must not be swayed by fashion or social considerations into the support of that which their brains and consciences condemn. Follow the best, and make it fashionable and popular, and adequate leadership will always be forthcoming.

To a just estimate of what great men really are, and of the

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part they play in the life of the world, we need to notice the universal tendency to idealize the distant and the unseen. We look at most things through the coloring and refracting medium of our own imaginations; so that our thoughts about persons or things are very rarely accurate copies of the things themselves. Men and women generally marry husbands and wives large parts of whom do not actually exist. We make people over into what we want them to be; and, unless the reality gives us too rude a shock, we may be happy enough to keep our ideals unbroken.

This is a large topic, but I can only apply it in one direction now. Probably no single character in history ever was precisely what we think about him to-day. Neither Nero, Alexander VI., Philip II., nor Henry VIII., were quite so bad as the popular estimate of them. This principle is recognized in the saying, "The devil is not so black as he is painted." What was Mary, the Queen of Scots? A vile woman, a black-hearted traitress, or the sweetest and loveliest of all martyrs? Neither the one nor the other, probably, though she is painted as both. Place side by side the Protestant Luther and the Catholic Luther,—the best, the worst of men. Somewhere between is the truth.

I remember what a shock it was to my boyish ideal of him, when I first learned that the newspapers of his day dared to criticise George Washington. I had thought that he must always have been treated with the same profound respect and reverent admiration with which my school-books had led me to regard him. But there was the fact: the papers that voiced the political opposition of the time had actually blackguarded him as bitterly as any mud-thrower of modern times is capable of doing. And, as I studied the matter, I soon learned that the actual Washington was very far from being only the stiff and stately statue standing in a niche of history, with all men reverently bowed at his feet. He had his little foibles and his pet prejudices, very much like us common men. Though gifted with a great patience, he had a temper that was capable of generating a thunder-storm of wrath;

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and when once roused, he was not much like the conventional figure praying in Valley Forge, but could swear with a violence of anger that swept over his victims like a tempest.

I do not speak of these things to belittle the great ones of the past, but rather to help us to a juster estimate of all men. We see the weaknesses and limitations of those with whom to-day we come in personal contact. Hence the truth of the complaint of Jesus, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." Jesus a prophet, his towns-people said: "Why, is not this the carpenter's son? His brothers and sisters, are they not here with us?" Said one in modern times of one who had grown famous: "He a great man? Why, I went to school with him!" We are apt to make those we know less than they are; and the dead we are quite as apt to make greater.

The Jesus of the popular ideal is probably anything but an exact copy of the man as he was known to his disciples. Ever since the popular imagination took him up, he has been made over in a thousand unreal ways. He has been made to condemn what his own words approved, and to approve what his own words condemned. They have made him God, pre-existent angel, perfect man, imperfect man, a character in romance, a myth. The probable truth is that, were he to appear before us once more in the flesh, none of us would recognize him as the original of the portrait our fancies have painted.

The great names of the past are like the skeleton lay-figures in the shop windows,— they stand looking out of the windows that line the roadways of history. And men drape them with the changing garments of their imaginations to suit the changing fashions of human thought. But though these changing fashions may not help us much to recover the exact original, they do help us much towards discovering the growing thoughts and advancing ideals of the race. They show us which way men and women are moving, and what they admire. Thus they give us the key to the common character, and help us to estimate the tendency of the times.

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Booth may appear as Othello one night and as Iago the next. He may be neither the one nor the other, but the emotions of the theatre help us to estimate the taste and character of the audience.

I do not think this tendency to idealize the world's heroes is a fault, or anything to be lamented. It is rather a glorification of common manhood and womanhood. It is a denial of pessimism, a refutation of total depravity. It means that the masses of the race admire goodness, that they are ready to see it, even to recognize it where it does not really exist. The "gallery gods" and "gamins" in a theatre can hardly be said to represent the best taste; and yet who ever heard them applaud villainy, or fail to respond to the appeal of natural nobility? So of the actors on the great stage of history, the common people have always been ready to believe them even better than they were; and if sometimes their judgment gave no great evidence of sagacity, it has always been a credit to their heart.

And this means that the common faiths, hopes, trusts, have always been larger, grander, more inclusive than most individual manifestations of them. The popular Socrates, the popular Jesus, the popular Luther, the popular Channing, are more than the actual, historic man.

And all this is prophecy, and prophecy of the most hopeful kind. The popular ideal of greatness and goodness, though it loves to fasten itself to the figure of some historic personage, is always more, higher and better, than he. It runs ahead of the fact, and so becomes a force to create a better fact.

Some one asked Father Taylor one day,—and his Orthodoxy was never suspected,—"Do you believe that any man has ever lived who was as good as Jesus?" With eager, quick response, he exclaimed, "Yes, millions of them!" The world's outlook would indeed be poor, were Father Taylor's hopeful words not true. The ideal Jesus must be an ineffectual force if, after eighteen hundred years, it has not realized itself in many a human life.

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Human admirations are the mightiest of all forces for the moulding of character. What men really admire,—*really* admire,—that they seek to be. The artist dreams of his ideal, and ever seeks to give it outward form. So all men and women are, consciously or unconsciously, ever working their own lives over into the likeness of what they admire.

Herein lies the importance of this human tendency to idealize the heroes of history; and herein the hopefulness of the fact that they tend to make them even better than they really were. Thus their model is always higher than was ever lived. And thus the world ever rises to incarnate this higher model. And, since the ideal forever runs on ahead of the actual, it becomes a perpetual force to stimulate to the creation of some new thing always better than the old.

For the sake then of the future, we will remember the heroes of the past. And since the forces of humanity must march on together, like the different corps of an army; since science, philanthropy, statesmanship, religion, act and react on each other, helping or hindering; since a triumph in one is a victory for all, or a defeat in one is a defeat for all,—it is fitting that religion should rejoice on the anniversary of a new birthday for human freedom. And in the principle that they are wise who remember and honor the great in any department of human thought or life, religion may learn a new lesson of reverence for her own long line of noble heroes, while we kindle the general sentiment of worship and aspiration in the common memories of such glorious days as the 17th of June.

NOTE.—This is the last sermon for the season. Publication will be resumed in the fall.

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